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WHISTLER'S FATHER

by the same author:

GARRETS AND PRETENDERS
TATTOO

WHISTLER'S FATHER

by

ALBERT PARRY



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“Russian railroads seem to be meant for Russian soldiers; and it is the facility thus afforded of moving large bodies of men that invests this mode of communication in Russia with an importance which does not attach to it in Great Britain, or perhaps any other country in Europe, to an equal extent. When St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and Warsaw become connected, Russia assumes an entirely new position with regard to the rest of Europe. A few days, instead of many months, will then suffice to concentrate the armies of the north and south upon the Austrian or Prussian frontiers. Through this same quarter of the world, many hundred years ago, poured those barbaric hordes which overran civilized Europe;—it would, indeed, be a singular testimony to the spirit of the age, if the next invaders made their descent by means of railroads.”—LAURENCE OLIPHANT, *The Russian Shores of the Black Sea in the Autumn of 1852.*

“Iron has abandoned its blood-stained calling and clasps the whole earth in its conciliatory embrace. It bends its back in order the more speedily and peacefully to unite mankind, which hitherto it divided in enmity. Iron no longer aspires to serve death, but life. Do you think these are rails? No, indeed; these are nuptial chains uniting the nations! Do you think this is a road? It is a wedding girdle, binding the peoples! Do you think these are iron wheels? They are wedding rings, with which peoples are married to peoples! Do you hear the seething of a steam boiler? It is the breathing of onward-aspiring spiritual forces! Do you hear the rumbling of wheels? It is the music in which the most distant hearts will find one another! Do you hear the bell ringing for departure? It is ringing in the birthday of a prosperous age! Do you see a railway station? In it the elements of a new future are assembling! Do you see those locomotives? They are the mighty wings of the century on its sunward flight! Do you see clouds of steam and pillars of smoke and scintillating sparks? That is the giant genius of the nineteenth century, exhaling his fiery breath and spewing out flames upon the narrow-minded doubters!”—*From an unidentified newspaper clipping of the middle of the last century.*

Introduction

MY MOTHER," said James McNeill Whistler, "my mother was an oldfashioned gentlewoman—fine! fine!"

And the artist made a gesture as if presenting his listener with a rare, exquisite flower. His eyes shone, his face was suffused with tenderness; gone for the moment was the cynical boulevardier.

Most gazers at the famous portrait see great serenity, infinite patience, much sweetness and light—a sort of universal mother. There is, indeed, a bit too much serenity even at first glance. Whistler at times recognized it. Accused of diluting the portrait with excessive sentimentality, he was practically on the defensive in his answer: "One does like to make one's mummy as nice as possible."

Latter-day specialists charge Whistler in a franker mood. Joseph Allworthy, the portrait painter, said not long ago that many visitors to the Louvre and, in the summer of 1933, to the Art Institute of Chicago saw a fine lady. "But a few," he went on, "saw a nasty old witch!" When pressed for his reasons, he explained: "Past experience with old ladies of her type."

Mr. Allworthy's suspicions are to a degree borne out in this book. I base my work on Mrs. Whistler's diary, hitherto largely untouched by the artist's biographers. I also lean upon a collection of letters by Major Whistler, Mrs. Whistler, and their kin, the Swift brothers,—the so-called Patten Collection, the existence of which has been until lately unknown to researchers and writers. From a careful study of these sources Anna Whistler emerges fatally as a power-grasping individual. Desperately she reached out for power over her family, over friends, acquaintances, even strangers. She had no real weapon wherewith to win and hold such power; that is, no gift, no ability, no mental superiority. So she used emotion, mainly that of morbid fear: her weapon was the next world. It was a very tangible next world. She could almost smell and taste it; certainly she could see and hear it. For its sake, life in this world had to be strait-jacketed into a joyless

hymn-singing experience; all had to goose-step toward the narrow paradise of her own making, under her leadership. But she was sincere about that next world; it was shortsighted of William Swift to hint at hypocrisy.

Because she was sincere, I rather expect my reader to be sympathetic with her, to be sorry for her. She had her fill of troubles and she cushioned them as best she could with such puritanic faith in a stern God as ordinarily befitted an old-time New Englander and not the Southerner that Anna was by origin and many associations. The intensity of her belief is remarkable; the modern-day reader of her diary and letters is almost envious that such strong aid in adversity could be anyone's.

Had the lady kept this simple-minded belief to herself, she might have been after all a lovable, however limited, figure. But she talked God too much to others, and, as she did so, she extolled God's cruelty rather than mercy. A preacher in skirts, she had an obnoxious habit of dragooning others into her own ways and opinions—a dangerous mania in anyone at any time. Yet, I repeat, she was sincere in her zeal. Mrs. Whistler was impudently hypocritical only when she insisted on claiming Debo as her daughter, when she tried to run (and, in a way, ruin) the girl by a mother's right over her. In Debo she saw not the girl but the girl's mother—the first Mrs. Whistler—and so was spiteful and jealous beneath the veneer of false solicitude, of mawkish love for the stepdaughter. She wanted for herself the deep love that Major Whistler felt for Debo. With this exception, Anna's sin was naïveté rather than hypocrisy. The net result was bad nevertheless: a stifling woman.

This naturally helps to explain Whistler the son with some added clarity: he was an individualist rebelling against his mother's unbearable sabbatarianism and discipline; still, since his revolt was on the whole early and successful, he bore no grudge against her whom he had so easily escaped. Moreover, having escaped Anna's rule, he developed her impatience of other people, he inherited her feeling of superiority—not in her strait-laced manner, of course, but in a loosely ribald way all his own.

But my book is called *Whistler's Father*. No brief for the forgotten man, it endeavors to help the reader find for himself the influence of Whistler's sire upon the painter, or, in a larger sense, the influence of the Russian years upon the future artist.

The years the family spent in St. Petersburg happened to be the most formative in the boy's life. He received his first systematic schooling in the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, and the grayish dreaminess, the blue dimness of the northern days, the harsh soulless pseudo-noble artistry dominating the Academy, left their impress upon the canvases of his later years. He reveled in the sound of the fluent French with which the Tsar's courtiers and officers sprinkled their Russian talk—it was in the St. Petersburg of the 1840s that he learned the faultless French with which to dazzle his later world of London and to appear as a Gallicized American in Paris. From the same stagnant waters came the snobbish manner of his adult years: heaped the Tsar's nobles in the contempt they had for the lower classes. A friend wrote of the grown-up James McNeill Whistler: "His only excuse for the masses was that they were a blot of color to be painted. To over-educate them, he said, was absurd." Thus the Russia of his childhood stamped him for life with its stuffy and merciless prejudices.

It was far from Major Whistler's rugged democratic intent to have his son grow up a snob. He sensed the danger and in despair planned for all of his family an early retreat from this barbarian splendor to the plain honesty of their native land. Yet the fact is there: Major Whistler was responsible for his boy's Russian years. In that period Whistler's mother tried to reign, but it was his father who remained the central figure and deciding factor.

Consciously or not, the boy Jimmie admired his father; in more than one way he tried to imitate him. His father was a distinguished foreigner in Russia; so was Jimmie in his own mind from the earliest 1840s in St. Petersburg to his death in 1903 in London. Whistler the father was a passionate patriot of America even while, a self-willed expatriate, he built that great railroad for the Tsar. Like his father, although with less excuse, Jimmie would exile himself from his native land. Like the engineer, the

painter would be at all times staunchly patriotic, even though, paradoxically, he would on occasion rant against America.

For James Whistler loved a different America from the one existing in his own mature years. He loved the pre-Civil War America, the genteel, relaxed, aristocratic land barely entering upon her industrial age. The vigorous America of the machines, coming into being after the 1860s, seemed so alien to the painter that he regretted and concealed the fact of his birth in Lowell, Massachusetts, a town of factory chimneys and noisy spindles even back in 1834. He lied that he was born in St. Petersburg. Sometimes he varied the tale by fibbing that he was born in the South of the States. His art was aloof from modern wheels and cogs; it was oriental or rural, certainly languorous and haughty. There was his rancor at the circumstance that while his father's folk were the pioneers of the Midwest, while his father was among the country's first engineers of consequence, other people—utter strangers, loud latecomers, low usurpers—were making fabulous profits out of the sod and out of the railroads his folk had opened. Behold the parvenus rising to mansions and yachts while the Whistlers live on modest pensions, paltry salaries, inadequate honoraria!

He despised the rising bourgeoisie who had fattened on his father's work, the climbers and pushers of plebeian origin whom the Russia of his boyhood had kept down with such an iron hand, the stuffy burgesses to whom he felt himself ever so foreign. It was said of James Whistler that he expected to be treated like a sensitive foreign government. An autocratic, aristocratic government, no doubt, a government like that of Tsar Nicholas I under which he grew up! How lovely it was in the olden days (he once mused) when kings could say, Cut off this man's or that man's head, and it was done at once. "As they can do it now," he added, "if they happen to be Emperor of China or Russia." A friend wrote of him: "He loved kings and queens and emperors, and had a feeling that his work should be bought by royalty only. Whistler was like a child in these matters." Aptly spoken—for the child's father had been employed by the most autocratic of European sovereigns, and Whistler would follow in his father's steps

by working for royalty and not for these upstart moneyed bourgeoisie.

And yet, at the same time, he clearly saw his father's failing: the undue modesty which upon the Major's death left the family almost penniless, while the Winans brothers, the plain mechanics whom Major Whistler had brought to Russia, became millionaires; the modesty because of which his father's achievements faded so quickly in the memory of men. At an early date the painter resolved not to repeat the engineer's error. Like his father, James Whistler was not an originator but a skillful collector and fuser of various discoveries and sundry tendencies. Unlike his father, he proclaimed himself a genius. As much as the father hid his light, the son would strut to the front.

And so, in his attitude toward his own art, we see Jimmie as an early George Bernard Shaw: tremendous conceit rooted in shrewdness, blossoming forth in self-conscious and self-advertising eccentricity. He wanted to be famous beyond his time and talent. He wanted to be classed with the classics, to be esteemed every bit as highly as the old masters, but he was not sure that an order of fame as large as that would come his way. That was mainly why he resorted to the cheap trickery of epigrams and monkeyshines at the expense of other people. He knew that his talent was considerable, but to be on the good side of unborn posterity he thought he had to be deft with tongue no less than with his brush. In his time, biting epigrams had a high market value. He was of the mistaken notion that it would ever be so.

II

While the son, with his make-believe eccentricity and brass trumpets, was to concern himself chiefly with himself, the father paid intelligent attention to the world around him—the feudal world he was helping to transform with that swift-footed, steam-breathing iron steed of his.

Major Whistler's eyes were sharp; he saw the Russians of the 1840s with an amazing penetration. Not a writing man, he jotted down his letters in a hurry at a blueprint-littered desk between

his incessant trips from St. Petersburg to Moscow and back. And yet these letters present a most valuable body of information that helps us to understand the genesis of the Russian republic of today.

However, valuable as they are, I found these letters insufficient to present a full enough picture of the Russia of the 1840s—the Russia that saddened the engineer, irritated his wife, and delighted their son—the land of grandeur and corruption that in the following decade was to meet its defeat at Sevastopol. I therefore supplemented the material of the Whistler letters and diary with extensive research in Russian memoirs, diaries, and other books pertaining to the period. Before me were the questions: Why were the Whistlers in Russia? Why did Major Whistler respond to the Tsar's call? Why did the Winanses, the Harrisons, the Eastwicks, and other mechanics follow? Why did so many other Americans, especially of the western states, deluge the Tsar and Minister Todd with their applications, projects, and inventions? And finally, what change did Whistler's railroad signify for Russia?

The answers are these:

America in the 1840s was restless and expansive. Not yet an industrial or overpopulated land, but attempting to escape her dilemma of slavery, she looked toward new horizons. We note that William McNeill, who so bitterly insisted on sharing Major Whistler's Russian profits, later tried to volunteer services in the Mexican war; and that General Duff Green, after his unsuccessful commercial schemes in Paris and London, after vainly trying to be Major Whistler's partner in St. Petersburg, played an important role in the encroachment below the Rio Grande. The Major himself cursed the day of his coming to Russia; time and again he said that America was the world's only sensible country, and that Americans should stay at home. Yet, despite the isolationism which he proudly lauded, despite the many disappointments besetting his Russian days, he seemed to have been fascinated by this treacherous Europe—this chaotic Russia—and deemed it his duty to remain there to his task's end. Moreover, notwithstanding the Major's many warnings and tragic end, his eldest son George

William at last, in 1856, came to do railroad-engineering in Russia; to name one of his daughters Neva; and, like his father, to stay in the outlandish capital to the year of his early death. And of the Winanses, one returned to America, true enough, but with a cosmopolitan wife—a Russian woman of French and Italian ancestry—and with many European customs which he delighted in practicing to the sunset of his days in Baltimore; while his brother and nephew settled down in Europe, both becoming curious blends of British-Russian gentry and huntsmen—a far cry from their sire and grandsire, Ross Winans, the farmer-mechanic of Maryland.

Russia in the same '40s was facing the very dawn of her own industrial capitalism. The first timid buds of her factories needed among other things better means of transport. But even the manufacturers and merchants of the country were not yet quite aware of the need. For Russia was a feudal realm. The process of liquidation of serfdom and of natural economy had already begun, but this was patent to few. Private enterprise in trade and industry was getting hold of dominating positions in the economics of the state, but how shyly and uncertainly! In social and political life these new men of money still counted but little. The aristocracy of the sword and of the manor yet ruled supreme. The masses, with the millions of serfs at the very bottom, fed the nobility who in their turn paid homage to the autocrat—so long as he was an autocrat in their behalf. To the Tsar the railroad was a fascinating toy and a quick means of transporting soldiers. To the nobles it was first a dangerous innovation, but soon enough a source of enrichment. The more active of the nobles constituted the parasitic bureaucracy of Russia, the officialdom that had grown accustomed to complete disregard of other classes' wants, to unbounded graft and bribery, to the most insolently open theft of the state's and people's money. The lives and sums allocated to the building of the railroad did not escape the general fate. The railroad was built in the period of decay of this feudalistic regime; it was to play a significant part in the development of Russia's new capitalism, yet, while being built, it bore all the earmarks of

the old regime of the sword and manor. The shining metallic ribbon was a boundary line between the old and the new.

Much of this was understood by Major Whistler. As the months of his work in Russia lengthened into years, his understanding became fuller, more acute. All too plainly he saw the appalling misery below and the brazen corruption above. The suave aristocrats were stealing the railroad-building funds while the job lagged, while the serfs in the labor camps sickened by the thousand and died by the hundred. The Tsar was diverting the last of the money to send his troops across the frontiers to quell or threaten the West European revolutions of 1848. With the serfs and troops, cholera traveled to all parts of the land, to all ranks of society, and at length Major Whistler succumbed, a homesick man longing for one more glimpse of his beloved America, dying of a broken heart more than of the disease itself, bidding Anna to take their boys back to the native shores at once, at once.

III

Thus it can be seen, I hope, that this book is more than a biography of Whistler Sr. I have endeavored to make it a meaningful tapestry of the period.

There is of course the man of this book's title—Whistler's father—a handsome, energetic yet moody man, flitting hither and yon as he supervises the Tsar's serfs building the novel path for the monstrous horse of iron. "How smart this foreign gentleman," said the awed mouzhiks, "who has harnessed this samovar and made it run!" Yet, the foreign gentleman was not at all satisfied with the awe of the masses and the flattery of the court.

But there is also his continuation and antithesis: young Jimmie in the close family circle, mother's darling and father's pet, tender but not very dutiful, taking his first lessons at the Imperial Academy, in love with the exotic glitter of the streets and people around him, imbibing greedily the noblemen's swank and snob-bishness which were to brand his own figure in the years to come.

There is his mother, a younger version than the one he was to

make world-famous in the sentimental portrait. In this St. Petersburg period she is proud of Jimmie's budding talent, worried over his illnesses and pranks, but above all distressed by the heathenish ways of these strange Russians. Doomed to perdition were they, the Russians who astoundingly and revoltingly did not believe in the God of the Protestants. To save their souls, she distributed tracts. And her children too had to distribute them.

There is the beautiful stepdaughter Debo, in constant half-hidden warfare against Anna's rule, the struggle ending in the girl's escape through marriage. This rift, unsuspected till today, is the most revealing skeleton in the Whistlers' closet.

There are other Whistlers and other Americans in Russia, and also the men and women of the British Factory in the Tsar's capital, a large and unique group of middle-class foreigners poised halfway between the glamor of the court and the savagery of serfdom and profiting from both. There are the Tsar's officers and officials, engineers and priests, merchants and serfs, the ruling and the ruled, the perfumed and the vermin-ridden, the romantic and the insane, the cruel and the brutalized. Dominating it all, looms the stern profile of Nicholas I, the Russian despot with a Prussian soldier's idea of economics, with the democracy-hating hysteria of all-embracing paternalism so suggestive of the basic element underlying certain European political systems of our own days.

A family chronicle; a panorama of the interplay of two cultures; a socio-economic kaleidoscope showing the first meeting, conflict, and collaboration of Russia's natural resources and unnatural autocracy with America's technical genius and unpretentious democracy—to achieve this manifold result has been my aim.

I have avoided long or frequent excerpts from the sources used, either Russian or American, yet I have tried to keep close to the text of those sources. I have attempted to tell the tale in my own language, yet to preserve the tang of the 1840s. No dialogue in this book is invented. It represents conversations or reflections recorded in the letters, memoirs, diaries, and other data. Likewise, mannerisms and gestures as well as looks and feelings of

the personages are portrayed on the strength of documentary evidence, and only in a very few instances I made bold to fill in such details with the aid of the indirect evidence of old portraits or my general knowledge of these men's and women's characters.

IV

Except for the title and this Introduction where Major George Washington Whistler is called Whistler's father, he is throughout my book referred to as Whistler, the name by which his wife and his associates referred to him, while James Whistler, the artist, then but a boy, is called Jimmie and occasionally Jamie, Jemie, and other variations of his first name used in the family circle. Mrs. Whistler, the mother of the future painter, is referred to most consistently as Anna, the name by which her husband usually addressed her. George or George William is of course the Major's eldest son, Jimmie's half-brother.

The Factory frequently mentioned in the narrative is not any industrial establishment but the British Colony in St. Petersburg.

I find that in their Russian period the Whistlers used the Western (Gregorian) calendar rather persistently. Therefore, all dates in this narrative are those of the Western calendar, which in the nineteenth century was twelve days ahead of the Julian or Old Style used in the Tsar's Russia. The weather is cited as I find it cited in the Whistler MSS—in Reaumur temperatures adopted by the Russians as against the Fahrenheit scale employed in America.

And finally, my apologies to purists of terminology for following the Whistlers' (and general) custom of referring to the established church of old Russia as the Greek Orthodox instead of the Russian Orthodox.

A number of persons on this side of the ocean have been extremely helpful in my task. The discovery of the Patten Collection will remain one of the most satisfying episodes in my experience as a researcher on the constant lookout for unknown data. I hereby pay tribute to the memory of the late William Patten, collateral descendant of Major Whistler's first wife and of the

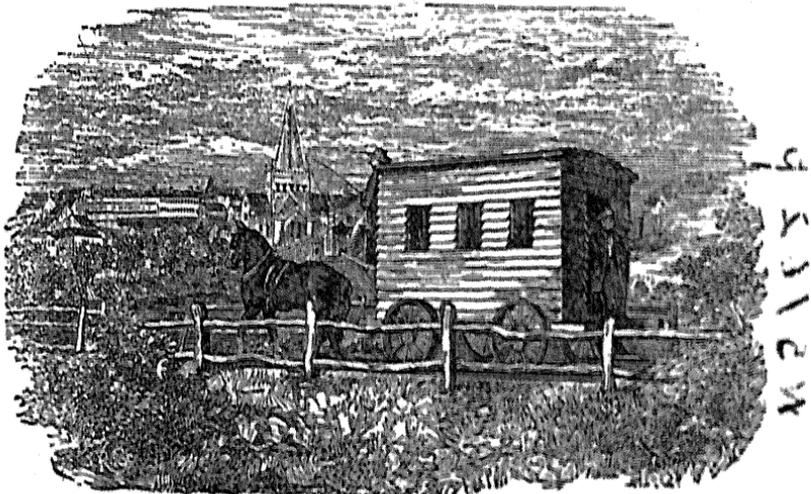
Swifts, who preserved the sixty letters of the collection and before his death in 1936 brought together a good deal of other supplementary material. To Mrs. Grace B. Patten, his widow, and Mr. John Patten, his son, of Rhinebeck, N. Y., goes my deep gratitude for the generous co-operation which they gave me—from their gracious reply to my first letter of uncertain inquiry to that momentous day when they turned over to me, for my free use, the entire collection. Needless to add, neither they nor anyone else of those who assisted me in finding the data should be held responsible for the way I used the material. Interpretation of all the sources has been solely my own.

At the end of the book the reader will find a longer description of the Patten Collection and the explanation of the ways in which I used the letters. There he will also find a detailed critical bibliography of my other sources. At this point I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Frederick W. Coburn of the Lowell *Courier-Citizen*, who so unstintingly opened his files and took me around the old stamping grounds of the Whistlers in Lowell, including of course the house in Worthen Street where Jimmie was born; to Mr. H. K. Barrows of Boston, who placed at my disposal his file accumulated while he was preparing an article on Major Whistler for the *Dictionary of American Biography*; and to Mr. Kenneth M. Gould of Scarsdale, N. Y., who not only informed me of the Fleming Collection of Whistleriana but also introduced me to its owners, Misses Eliza A. and Grace Fleming. In the latter connection the kind help of Mrs. Anne Miller Downes of Scarsdale should also be noted. For exceptional facilities extended in the use of Mrs. Whistler's diary I am indebted to Mr. Wilmer R. Leech, assistant to keeper of manuscripts, and Mr. Robert Lingel, chief of the acquisition division, both of the New York Public Library.

To the poet Mr. C. A. Millspough, Department of English, the University of Chicago, is due my immeasurable appreciation for the sensitive rendition into English verse of my literal translation of the Russian folk ballad commemorating Major Whistler's railroad (see pages 339-41 of this book). My friends and fellow-historians, Mr. Jerome Blum of Johns Hopkins University and

Mr. Richard J. Hooker of the University of Chicago, betrayed no fatigue—Mr. Blum as he drove me around Baltimore, pointing out the vestiges of the old Winans glory and regaling me with local legends of the locomotive-makers' clan both before and after their profitable adventure in the Tsar's Russia; Mr. Hooker as he searched in his collection of old letters and other documents of Americana to supply me with needed illustrations. Mrs. Anna Heifetz of the Slavonic division in the New York Public Library displayed both initiative and patience as she helped me find illustrations in Russian sources. Mr. John S. Worley, curator of the Transportation Library, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, provided me with rare prints and other material. In the matter of illustrations I was aided also by Mr. B. E. Young of the Association of American Railroads in Washington and Mr. Robert M. Van Sant of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Unfailing courtesies were also accorded by the librarians of the Library of Congress at Washington, the Widener Library of Harvard University, and the Newberry Library in Chicago.

ALBERT PARRY



The First Railroad Car

Book One

Chapter One

IN THE summer of 1842, when Major George Washington Whistler arrived in London, he chose the place where he had stopped on that first trip thirteen years before: the Caledonian Hotel, Adelphi Terrace.

The terrace was lofty yet moody on the crutches of its arches fronting the Thames. The sooty grandeur of London enveloped the traveler, and made him uneasy. This mellow grime seemed so different from what it had been way back in 1828 and '29. Both he and London were older, and Mac was not with him. On a mid-July day he sat down to write to his brother-in-law:

"Hear I am, dear Mac. This London is a dreadful place to be alone in, and I am literally alone."

He wrote a long and pleasant letter. Mac, the madcap Mac, was Anna's brother; long before the marriage Mac had been his particular friend. It was too strange and bad that Mac—William McNeill—had changed so in the last few years, but Whistler would show patience. Coming to England brought memories, and it was but natural to write to Mac when the Major was alone in the very place where thirteen years before he and Mac had been jolly together.

The traveler was alone because Major Ivan Bouttatz, the Russian who was escorting him from America, had wanted to see Paris. Whistler had let him go, himself remaining in England. He planned to glimpse something of her railroads. Also, he awaited the arrival of a steamer which he knew left Boston on the first and so possibly had letters from home—from Anna.

He was homesick. He did not know that he had ever experienced just such feelings.

"I trust," he gravely tried to console himself, "when I get to Russia and am at work—when I see exactly my position—I shall be more comfortable."

For the life of him, he said, he could not divest himself of this

depression. Anxiety gripped him oftentimes as he thought of the family behind and the job ahead.

"Thank God," he wrote to Mac, "I can return if I do not like it." He hastened to add: "Of course I shall like it if they like me."

II

To dispel the gloom he more zealously than ever went around England to see her rail-net.

The architectural display of the railroad buildings was of course considerable. It was what he and other American railmen never pretended to back home. But their tracks in New England were as good as the roads leading from London. That is, they were better than the Great Western—not so good as the Liverpool and Manchester—better than the Grand Junction—as good as the London and Birmingham—and just like the Birmingham and Gloucester.

This last road, to his delight, he found quite American: the same rails, laid on wooden sleepers—only they were what the Americans would call bad sleepers—and used a chair at each. The road had American-style bridges and Norris' American engines. If not for the nice slopes and fine walls one might imagine himself at Lowell, Massachusetts.

He bowed ceremoniously as he was introduced to engineers. With a grave interest he listened to their talk. The Stephensons, father and son, he had met on that first trip, in 1828-29. He liked the elder man. A clever man he was, a wonder, to rise from common digging in the Newcastle pits to engineering—observe how highly! But his son Robert was another matter. Whistler did not prize this young man who had been educated at the University of Edinburgh and talked in highfalutin' terms because he felt the necessity of impressing people. With other Britishers of his profession Whistler was on the whole disenchanted. He had expected all those men of reputation to be great men indeed, supermen in fact, yet here they were human beings with mortal vanities and deficiencies, alas.

They had made themselves a set of pettifogging attorneys.

When a railway or a canal was projected, and a bill had to be passed, there was opposition, and both sides employed engineers as they would barristers. A ghastly thing! For money these engineers would deliver before parliament any opinion desired of them, right or wrong. Thus did they destroy the weight of their new and valuable profession. They undermined the public confidence in it. England's railroads were of better quality than the engineers who built them. The visitor said:

"I would not be an engineer in this country were I ever so capable. For the profession does not, nor can it, stand upon so respectable a footing as in our country."

III

As he went around, viewing, comparing, criticizing, he could have been taken not for the military man and the engineer that he was, but for an artist: his hair in long and curly locks framing both sides of the pleasant face; his skin white and smooth; his mouth delicate despite the energetic set of the seemingly thick lips.

And in truth, at spare moments he ably played his flute, while back in his West Point class he had stood first in drawing and later assisted in teaching the art. It was said that nearly all, but especially the young ones, felt the better for a kindly look and word from him. Yet he was a manly man, notwithstanding his finesse, his attractive expression and ways.

He was born in 1800 at Fort Wayne. His father was an Irishman, his mother English and a knight's daughter. A soldier in Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne's army, John Whistler was first a prisoner of the triumphant Americans, but later turned himself an American. He served in the army that had captured him, and he named his son after the young country's first commander-in-chief. When George Washington Whistler was three years old, his father—Captain John—took the family to Chicago before it was Chicago.

Captain John reached the sandy beach of Lake Michigan to

found and command Fort Dearborn. His son grew up in the wilderness of the prairie, to leave it for the schoolrooms and barracks of the Hudson River bluffs, and to return to the shores of the Great Lakes as a young officer-surveyor serving a boundary commission. The Whistler family was as much part of the frontier as the coonskin caps of the voyageurs, the buckskin knees of the traders, the palisade tips and wooden bastions and the powder and shot of the early posts and settlements.

It was amid the heat and snows of the prairies and forests that George Washington Whistler learned to resent man's enemy—space. To conquer space, to shorten intolerable distances, to race against time, such was his self-ordered task.

In the middle 1820s the young officer heard of the new invention of the English: the iron road along which steam-driven carriages sped men and freight. Logically, the prairie surveyor became the railroad builder, one of the first in the States. For private railroad enterprise in America at first lacked its own engineers and had to borrow the army's men. The War Department loaned Whistler to the company projecting the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad; it was this company that in the fall of 1828 sent him, Mac, and a third engineer to study the tracks and engines of England's two railroads. On his return home Whistler helped lay the B. & O.'s first mile of track, then was shifted to other, newer lines, still an army officer—until a capricious general forced him to give up his commission. Whistler was hurt, but people called him Major as he continued laying innumerable tracks, mostly on the Atlantic seaboard, as his fame spread in ever-widening rounds till it reached that vague land named Russia, and the Tsar sent for him to string the wondrous ribbon of iron between the Empire's two capitals, the old Moscow and the new Peter's burg.

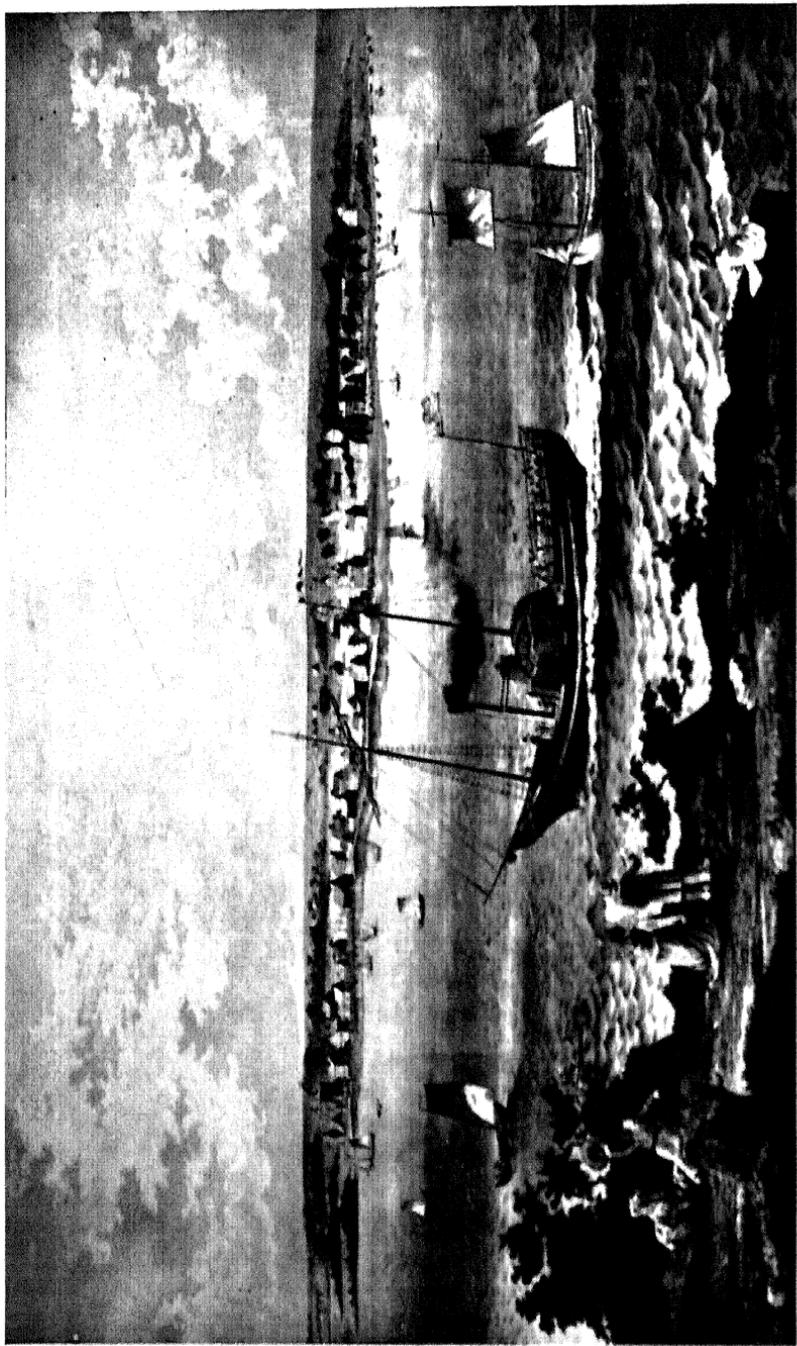
At forty-two Whistler was a widower once and married twice. By the late Mary Swift and by the present Anna McNeill he had a number of children, and he loved and missed them all as he journeyed, a lone man, across the ocean, and as he dejectedly waited at Adelphi Terrace for letters that did not come.

He sat in his hotel room, and his thoughts were with the fam-



George W. Whistler

Major George Washington Whistler shortly before his departure for Russia.
(Artist unknown.)



Detroit in 1820, painted by George Washington Whistler.
Courtesy Transportation Library, University of Michigan

ily: his children and his wife, and his wife's erring but beloved brother William Gibbs McNeill, and his late Mary's calm and reasonable brother Joseph Gardner Swift.

The brothers of both his wives were army men who too had turned railroad builders. Pioneers all.

IV

Pioneers all, of a new and daring variety.

The novel means of motion was yet suspect. To many it seemed fantastic, unnatural, and fraught with peril. A short time before Whistler entered the profession a British engineer had asked in a journal whether there was anything more absurd and laughable than the claim that locomotives could go faster than stage-coach horses. In 1832, while the Major was building what later became part of the Erie Railroad, a bill for the first rail line from London to Birmingham was rejected by parliament because landed gentry opposed it. Lords fought the steam road and would not permit surveyors within their domains. Sooner, they said, would they admit a robber than a railroad engineer.

There was fear that the puffing monster of a train would prevent cows from grazing and giving milk, and hens from laying eggs. Horses, falling into disuse, would become totally extinct. The monster's smoke would poison the air, thus killing the birds and animals of the vicinity. Pheasants and foxes, the gentleman's sport, would disappear from the disturbed land. In the absence of horse travel, oats and hay would fall in price. Ruin was in store for the hostleries along the post roads. All houses near the new road were certain to catch fire and perish. And who indeed would be bold enough to use the frightful iron-road? A trip on the rail would be exceedingly perilous, for should the locomotive explode the passengers would be torn to bloody pieces.

Prominent physicians supported lords' objections and commoners' fears. Consider the railroad tunnel, they said. Traveling through a tunnel in fast cars would cause healthy people to contract colds, catarrh, and tuberculosis. The deafening noise and the sudden immersion in darkness would craze the passengers.

In Germany, experts maintained that when a train went through a tunnel all the passengers were certain to suffocate. On tunnelless lines travelers would lose too much strength to be fit for further life: the awful speed of fifteen miles an hour would cause their noses to spurt blood profusely. An official medical organization of Bavaria predicted illnesses of the brain for all rail travelers. Nay, non-traveling onlookers might acquire the same diseases. To prevent this, high fences should be erected, shutting off the sight of the road.

Dysentery, St. Vitus's dance, epilepsy, and miscarriage were prophesied by French doctors as the inevitable bitter fruit of travel by rail and steam. Railroad employees would be constantly bedridden at home or in hospitals, and their lives would be brief. Adolphe Thiers, the future creator of the Third Republic, then but beginning his public zeal, said that civilization, thank God, had reached a point where a human life was valued highly; yet, should the railroad spread over the face of the earth, man's life would be cheapened. He thundered: "The costly luxury of the rich! Toys for the Parisians!"

In Belgium, it was argued that railroads would be of little use because traffic on them could be possible in daylight only. Besides, what would the poor farmers do, those who depended on carting in the winter as upon an additional source of livelihood? Their horses would stand idle in the stables several months of the year, a burden to the peasants who would have to feed the beasts all winter long with no return.

Even in sober practical America there were doubting Thomases and woe-foretelling Jeremiahs.

In the railroad car, complained Henry Thoreau, there was more luxury than convenience, more softness than safety. The car was no better than a modern drawing room cluttered with divans and ottomans and sunshades and many other oriental things. The women of the Near Eastern harem and the effeminate men of the Far Eastern palace might lounge amid such enervating splendor, but Brother Jonathan should be ashamed to ape them.

"I," said the philosopher righteously, "would rather sit on a

pumpkin and have it all to myself than be crowded on a velvet cushion."

The nobly spartan fabric of the American pioneer was threatened.

"I," protested the Yankee hermit, "would rather ride on earth in an ox cart, with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a *malaria* all the way."

Did the people not realize that for the faint pleasure of riding in the cars they had to give the equivalent of a day's labor? Or even two or three days? Pray, is it for the good of us all that the joint stocks and busy spades produced railroads? No, for the good of a few. A crowd rushes to the station, the conductor calls, "All aboard!" But the smoke is blown away, the train is far off, and it is readily seen that the lucky handful are riding while the many are run over. Stay at home and mind your business, urged the Contemplator of the Pond. Improve your lives, and then nobody would want railways. If travel you must, do so by old means, slowly but certainly.

The slower you went the surer you were to reach heaven. In Rome, the Pope barred railroads from his state because they would work harm to religion. In America, pastors inveighed against the schemers who already talked of building a speedy iron-road between the two coasts—rank blasphemy, since the Lord clearly specified against it when he deposited high mountains and vast deserts between the East and the West.

V

Yet, as early as 1804, when Whistler was but a four-year-old lad, there were men who saw far ahead, whose plan of the future wonder was insistent and inspired. In that year Oliver Evans built America's first steam engine and ran it on the streets of Philadelphia before twenty thousand spectators. Nine years later, this same Evans, this man called steam-mad, published a most remarkable prophecy. He wrote:

"The time will come when people will travel in stages

moved by steam engines, from one city to another, almost as fast as birds fly. . . .

"Passing through the air with such velocity, changing the scene in such rapid succession, will be the most exhilarating, delightful exercise.

"A carriage will set out from Washington in the morning, the passengers will breakfast at Baltimore, dine at Philadelphia, and sup at New York, the same day.

"To accomplish this, two sets of rail ways will be laid, so nearly level as not in any place to deviate more than two degrees from a horizontal line, made of wood or iron, or smooth paths of broken stone or gravel, with a rail to guide the carriages, so that they may pass each other in different directions, and travel by night as well as by day; and the passengers will sleep in these stages as comfortably as they now do in steam stage boats.

". . . the body of the carriages will be shaped like swift swimming fish, to pass easily through the air. . . .

"And it shall come to pass, that the memory of those sordid and wicked wretches who oppose such improvements, will be execrated, by every good man, as they ought to be now.

"Posterity will not be able to discover why the legislatures, or Congress, did not grant the inventor such protection as might have enabled him to put in operation these great improvements sooner. . . . The clouds of darkness will be dissipated by time. . . . The United States will be the first nation to make this discovery, and to adopt the system, and her wealth and power will rise to an unparalleled height.

"The inventors will then be revered when rich, by such base spirits as now insult and rob them, when poor, as well as by the generous and just, for having enriched their country."

Dying in 1819, Evans did not see his prophecy come true. Whistler in the 1840s saw the dawn of the better day.

VI

Whistler was, in a measure, flattered by the fuss made over him. When he had first arrived he found a note from a fellow American, General Duff Green, asking for an interview. He re-

ceived an invitation to a ball given by Baroness Brunov, wife of the Tsar's ambassador in England. General Green came twice, leaving his cards, and at length spent an hour with Whistler. Another peripatetic American, Elliott Cresson, left several cards. On the last of these he scribbled his urgent wish to see Major Whistler who was to bring to the attention of Tsar Nicholas I a matter of much importance "to our country and the cause of humanity."

All this was done in plain sight of the manager, the headwaiter, and sundry other flunkeys at the Caledonian. They were awed, and began to hand everything on silver platters. It was quite unlike that first sojourn of thirteen years before.

"I wonder," chuckled Whistler, "who the devil the people in the house have taken me for?"

He answered his own rhetorical query, in fleeting and restrained satisfaction, with a dash of dry irony: "Certainly for some great man."

Most of the visitors were of no value to him, but in the world at large they cut weighty figures.

General Duff Green was a Missourian of imposing appearance, tremendous energy, and some bluff. There was no gainsaying that back in the States he had political power. In Washington he had edited the opposition organ during John Quincy Adams' presidency and the administration journal of Jackson's first term. Green's eldest daughter married Calhoun's eldest son. Green executed all manner of political maneuvers on Calhoun's behalf as well as his own. Mostly his own—as the years rolled by, and the main controversy sharpened. For Green was neither a slaver nor an abolitionist but a man of new mark: an expansionist who felt that in close collaboration of the old South and the new West, in better attention to matters of commerce and industry on a wide scale, lay the answer to America's ailment.

Green despised provincialism and fancied himself an able economist. A free-trader, he was on this side of the ocean to talk the iniquities of tariffs, to settle unofficially the problem of European support so annoyingly offered to the American abolitionists, to do what he could about the Oregon and Texas thorns—that is,

to convince his English friends that they really should concede the American point in each of these delicate problems. Incidentally, he was to pick up a few personal plums of contracts, concessions, trade deals, and such. He came to London flushed with the alleged triumph of his previous winter in Paris, where he had met Baron Rothschild and Count Meyendorff, the Tsar's agent.

Green claimed that he too had been engaged by the Tsar to do something or other about Russia's railroad, and urged Whistler to work with him. He explained that Count Meyendorff envisaged the line as not stopping at Moscow but going on to Odessa—the new and promising port founded for the late Tsar Alexander I by the émigré Frenchman, the Duc de Richelieu. In this year of 1842 a fleet was being built at Sevastopol to command the Black Sea and perhaps seize the Dardanelles. Americans, sir, were to play an important part in the great events to come. Green said:

"The Count gave me letters to the Emperor and others at St. Petersburg. The understanding is that in case of a rupture with England I would go to St. Petersburg to aid in the organization of a European and American coalition against the maritime supremacy of England."

Green reported all this to President Tyler, and the President had responded by forwarding to him an autograph letter instructing Minister Todd to introduce Green to the Tsar. In France, Green had proposed railroads and steamship lines, and had offered coal from his Virginia mines for sale to the enterprisers of Paris. He hinted of enormous plans coming to fruition, of colossal profits, of power and glory for America and Americans—power and glory on an international footing.

But precisely what did General Green want of Major Whistler?

Ah, a trifle, a trifle! General Green had a scheme of establishing in St. Petersburg what he called a Bureau of Contracts, with himself at the head, of course. Here was the letter of introduction from President Tyler. Here was another from Governor Cass, our minister in Paris, through whom Green had met Rothschild. Other people of note were mentioned in the same breath, other

letters and promises flashed. All he wanted was Major Whistler's influence, to boot.

Whistler listened with cool politeness. Green in his talk was going in all directions and arriving nowhere.

A day or two later he called again. This time his gait was subdued. He was less assertive, and neither dictated nor offered. Rather, he asked the Major's *advice* with regard to the projected Bureau.

And again Whistler coldly yet civilly abstained from giving either aid or advice. The General retreated with naught gained. Not in this hotel room were plums to be had for the asking. Not from this curiously taciturn countryman of his.

VII

As for Mr. Cresson—Elliott Cresson—he proved to be a Quaker from Philadelphia and a pillar of the American Colonization Society. His lifework was to buy Negro slaves, to take them out of the States, and to settle them in the newly created African republic of Liberia.

Cresson in his time was known as the Society's most belligerent Friend. An eccentric and erratic bachelor in his late forties, he would stir up a hornet's nest from Bangor to New Orleans to gain his point; he would bring the very elements into motion to humble his enemies. Those who opposed him were, in his eyes, a perverse set. And he found many who opposed him. He tore into the Garrisonians with a fury. Within his own organization he always charged someone or other with inefficiency and worse sins. It was typical for a fellow Colonizationist to write of him: "I have just seen Mr. Cresson and heard only complaints from him for three hours."

The Garrisonians despised men of Cresson's like as low abettors of slavery. Why pay for the slaves, and why ship them to unknown Africa? These Negroes were native Americans, and there was room for them in the States. Freedom and equality should be their rights. A safety valve was provided by the Cressons for the rotten institution of slavery. This safety valve perpetuated slavery.

Cresson went on with his work. The wealth he possessed irked him; it had come too surely and naturally from a long line of Americans stemming from the first Cresson, an immigrant from Picardy. Elliott Cresson gave it away steadily, firmly. An earnest one-idea man, he devoted his years and fortune to Negroes and was angrily surprised that others would not do likewise. He traveled to New England, to the South, and to England, everywhere soliciting funds, and arranging inspirational dinners.

So here he was in Whistler's room, with passionate solemnity endeavoring to prove that it was the engineer's duty to interest Emperor Nicholas I in the holy cause of buying Negroes into freedom, of settling them in Liberia. Whistler and the Tsar were to be the straws to keep Cresson from sinking. The Quaker saw nothing incongruous, nothing impossible, in winning the Russian autocrat to the pro-Colonization stand. The man responsible for the continued bondage of forty million whites was to aid in freeing two and one-half million blacks. If the Tsar never heard of the Colonizationists, if the hateful name of William Lloyd Garrison meant nothing to him, it was Whistler's sacred task to enlighten Nicholas and so enlist him.

Listening to Cresson's mad entreaty, bowing him out with a gentle iciness, Whistler felt more alone than ever.

VIII

Even as he sought solace in viewing the railways and the repair shops of London, he was finding less and less of satisfaction. For by now there was a rigid system of police at all those places, much more rigid than he had encountered thirteen years earlier. Were the British becoming jealous and suspicious of their oversea admirers? Did they sense in the Americans not flattering imitators but dangerous competitors? You could see nothing as you would wish, grumbled Whistler. You could not go into a railroad station and look about you. You had to wade through trouble in order to secure a pass, and then a person was sent round with you, and the person was usually in a hurry.

When not looking at rails and examining engine houses, when

alone at Adelphi Terrace with his thoughts, Whistler was again assailed by doubts: oh, the dark mirror of the future! He required all his strength to struggle with a horrible feeling of regret at the acceptance of the St. Petersburg job. This regret was a weakness. He knew he must somehow fight it. Here he was, lingering in England, when he should be hastening to the Tsar's capital. "I long to see St. Petersburg. . . . To see those with whom I'm to be associated."

But even there he might feel an unpleasant doubt of so many things! He wished his family were with him. "Oh what would I not give for a peep across the water!"

The steamer from Boston was delayed. Whistler could wait no longer, for Major Bouttatz had returned from Paris and was urging him on, eastward. He had to leave for Russia, thus postponing for three long weeks the relief of Anna's letters.

The two Majors, American and Russian, sailed. They were bringing with them a small library of technical books, a steam pile driver, a steam excavator, also a steam engine to lug earth at excavations. The machines had been bought in New York and Washington, and they surely were the latest evidence of Yankee cleverness. In Whistler, pride mingled with forebodings.

Chapter Two

NICHOLAS I, Tsar of All the Russias, was a stiff-necked man. His stubbornness, it was said, reached the insanity of a pregnant woman when she wanted something not with her reason but with her animal belly. It was fruitless if not disastrous to argue with this Romanov and his restless severity.

As early as the middle 1830s he wanted railroads. This was puzzling when you considered that once, on an official document containing the word *progress*, Nicholas wrote nervously: "This word must be deleted from official terminology."

Tsar Nicholas I was a monomaniac, narrow yet clear-cut in his thoughts and actions. He never entertained any such liberal or mystic qualms as had distinguished his late brother and predecessor Alexander, the murderer by connivance of their mad father Paul. Contemporaries said that Nicholas had a sense of humor; abroad he was described as at once a tyrant and a droll. Actually, there was nothing humorous about this reactionary, this martinet, this executioner of the cold-blooded sort.

As a boy and youth he had not been educated to be Russia's ruler, for another brother had stood between Alexander and him. Nicholas had been neglected, almost forgotten; he had spent most of his young years in barracks, on parade grounds, and in the anterooms of military offices. Thus, when so unexpectedly to himself he reached the throne, he proved every inch an august top-sergeant. A dalai-lama in jackboots, he was called by a Russian writer. Russia to Nicholas was a vast regiment to be yelled at, to be given its marching orders.

He tried to suppress every free thought in his tsardom. He censored the press, the schools, the theater, even street talk. Not a house, public or private, could be built in the capital without his approval of the blueprints. He interfered in family affairs of his subjects, settling disputes and upholding parental authority. So irascibly was he devoted to absolutism, so morbidly did he hate

and fear the faintest tinge of liberalism, that several times in his reign he offered his troops across half of Europe to quell rebellions of foreign peoples against their sovereigns.

Behold, then, the paradox of this retrograde essaying in Russia a program of technical improvement that in his day was deemed little short of revolutionary. He wished to experiment with those dragons of the rail, the creatures of fiery lungs and steamy breath, when even the West considered them visionary, stomach-upsetting, and downright dangerous.

The enigma of the Tsar's behavior may in part be explained by the fact that at the very opening of his reign, in 1825, there had been the so-called Decembrist uprising. Young noblemen, the flower of his nobility and army, had risen against him. They had a program of wide political and social reform, in part conceived during their sojourn in the Western Europe of the Napoleonic wars. But the well-intentioned rebellion was badly generated, and Nicholas put it down. He hanged five of the leaders, and exiled some hundred and twenty others to Siberia. Then, for years, while they toiled and withered in the mines, while Russia lay frightened at his feet, he strained to show to the young men he had buried alive that he was as progressive as they but without using the baneful word; that he was abreast of the times in a better, more mattering way; that he would elevate this nation of sixty million mutes by the bootstraps of technical, not social, improvement.

And so, spasmodically, the Tsar pretended that trade and industry were his care. Cautiously, beginning in the middle of the 1830s, he playacted in this problem of railroads.

II

From the very first steps of the iron horse America's railmen kept a watchful eye on Russian possibilities. In 1830 Philip E. Thomas, first president of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, invited Baron Krudener, the Tsar's envoy, to a trip on the sailing-car then in process of experimentation. It was called the *Æolus*, and, though it ran on rails and had friction wheels installed by that

able mechanic, Ross Winans of Baltimore, it was made of basketry, shaped like a boat, and equipped with sails. The Baron came, navigated over the rails, his own noble self trimming the sails and handling the halyards, and was pleased. Thomas begged him to accept a miniature model of the *Æolus* to be sent to Tsar Nicholas; he added that the experiment already made had showed the advantages of the railroad not only for Stephenson's small island but also for such an extensive continent as the Baron's country or this America. Thomas orated:

"The discovery promises greater advantages to Russia and the United States than to any other countries. . . . Should our present anticipations of the efficiency of railways be realized, a total change would be produced in commercial and social intercourse in every country where these roads might be introduced."

Did he not know that it was dangerous to talk to the Tsar's man of a phenomenon which might revolutionize a thing social? He was—or so it seemed—on safer grounds when he predicted:



The Car That Sailed

"Should the Emperor introduce railroads into Russia, it would not be many years before a railway would be constructed between the Baltic and the Black Sea, along the rivers Dvina and Dnieper, and such a road would enable Russia to encircle in her arms, not only the northern but also the eastern frontier of Europe, and thus greatly extend her power and influence."

But thus to tell the Russians their own possible plans was not exactly diplomatic. No, the grounds were not safe at all. The crafty Baron exclaimed:

"My dear sir, you cannot suppose that Russia has any ambition, that she desires to increase either her power or influence! On these points she will remain content with her present position!"

The Baron was impressed with the rail-and-sail car sufficiently to send two Russian navy officers to investigate it more thoroughly, but if there was a vision of Russian seamen establishing and running the Tsar's first railroad nothing came of it.

The sailing-car was soon abandoned. Meanwhile, a Russian mechanic, one Cherepanov, traveled to England to study Stephenson's steam locomotion. In 1833, on his return to the Ural mountains, the man fashioned and ran a locomotive of his own, using steam—not sail—to haul ore and coal. But his contraption too was soon out of commission and the Russians' memory.

As if to repay Thomas' unused gift, there came to America in 1834 the Russian plank road. In Canada it shortly assumed proportions of a craze, and thence it spread to the muddy highways of Illinois and other Midwestern prairies. A path of heavy boards or planks resting crosswise on parallel rows of solid wooden sills, this Russian innovation was deemed the final answer to the Midwest's problem of transportation.

But in the same early '30s Franz von Gerstner decided to see whether he would not succeed where Thomas had failed. He was a Czech, an Austrian nobleman, a knight of the Maltese order, the son of a well-known mathematician, and himself an engineer. To his credit he had several small railroads in Western Europe. He talked with eloquence of this wonderful new means of communication, yet by some Russians he was to be regarded a char-

latan—perhaps because he talked so well. His ability was outstanding, but someone spread a false rumor that Gerstner was poor at figures, that he had miscalculated the cost of his most recent line in Bohemia and had not been able to complete its construction.

The Czech would bring railroads to Russia's steppes—this despite the enmity of gossipers, despite warnings that he might not gain the Tsar's ear. Before he set out there was but one handshake of encouragement: from Maltsov, a Russian manufacturer of glass, who felt a childlike love for anything that went on wheels or was jerked by vapors. Once, after a trip on the Liverpool-Manchester railway, this Russian had suggested through a courtier that Nicholas would do well to introduce into his Empire the new mode of motion. The despot had called him a lunatic. Maltsov was hopeful nonetheless. Meeting Gerstner in Vienna, he advised:

"The Tsar loves clever, timely flattery. Don't forget it. Be as pleasant as you can."

Gerstner reached St. Petersburg in 1834. His first project was for building a railroad between the old capital and the new. If successful, he would cover the entire country with metal wheel tracks. Should his rails stretch all the way to Kazan, should he also be permitted to start a steamship line down the Volga to the Caspian Sea, Russia's trade with Asia would quicken and fatten, while England's powerful competition would droop. Gerstner knew the Tsar's dislike of perfidious Albion and his desire to imitate the British and thus defeat them; the Czech would play this string with dexterity.

The Austrian minister brought Gerstner to Nicholas. The autocrat impassively listened to the proposal of creating a stockholding railway company with a twenty-year monopoly. He displayed a livelier interest when Gerstner said: "Your Majesty, at a notice of but twenty-four hours the railroad will be able to transport five thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry with all their horses, cannon, and wagons. Permit me to recall England's experience. There, during the recent Irish troubles, the government within two hours brought troops over the rail from Manchester to Liverpool, thence to be embarked for Dublin."

Nicholas nodded eagerly:

"Yes, this deserves attention."

III

Early in 1835 the Emperor called together a committee. What would his ministers say of the Czech's idea?

Count Tol, minister of communications and public buildings, was aghast. Only a short time before a Frenchman had asserted in public prints that both in Europe and America railroads were a most democratic institution. Count Tol considered this opinion as tragically correct. The railroad—any railroad—would indeed be a weapon of democracy. Railroads would in sooth lead to the equality of the classes, a pernicious state of affairs where a statesman and a commoner, a blueblood and a mouzhik, would ride in the same train and, God forbid, perchance in the same car.

The minister also attacked the opinion that railroads would be a success in Russia because they were succeeding in America. This nonsensical talk of similarity between the Yankees' terrain and the holy Russ land! North America never knew such frosts and snows as Russia's. The northernmost fringes of the United States had as mild a climate as the southern Ukraine. Russia's cold and ice would stop the novel machines; steam would be frozen in a trice. Linking by rail the Tsar's two capitals? Why, there were the marshes of Novgorod blocking the way, and the insurmountable hills of Valdai, and the frequent river floods.

After Tol, Count Kankrin raised his cantankerous voice.

The almighty Kankrin was he, the obstinate German who spoke broken Russian notwithstanding long years in the Tsar's service, the minister of finance of as much fame and conservatism in European lands as was Hamilton in his time in America. Kankrin felt that he had on many occasions rescued the Tsar's treasury in no other way except through crafty parsimony. He counted himself greater than Hamilton, aye, greater than Adam Smith.

At this time he was old and tired. He foresaw depletion of the Tsar's coffers and credit if Russia went a-railroading. Sudden large

expenditures would destroy the balance he had achieved in the treasury; later, loans from foreign bankers would weaken the splendid rating he had won for Russia's obligations. Were Nicholas to build such devilish roads he, Kankrin, stood ready to resign.

Nicholas was troubled by the threat of Kankrin's resignation. In the 1830s money was the only thing the Emperor dared not manage alone. The ruler was as shallow an economist as his minister. He did not realize that Kankrin had been aided not by his alleged wizardry but by the general situation in Western Europe. Peace in post-Napoleonic Europe led to an increase in population; the industrial revolution was cutting down agricultural production. America was not yet the exporter of wheat that she was destined to become; thus the Russia of Nicholas I enjoyed the practical monopoly of shipping grain to Western Europe in return for gold. Peasants might—and did—starve, but his landlords and his state farms would sell the precious bread to foreigners. That was how Kankrin had stacked up the Tsar's balances.

Stiffening his aging body, Kankrin talked on, varying the Belgian argument: appearance of railroads in Russia would be a blow to those mouzhiks who eked out their earnings by carting and river-rafting. Also, locomotives needed fuel—Russia's stately forests would be annihilated in no time at all. In the ignorance of the period he stoutly maintained that there were no coal resources in the Empire. Coal would have to be purchased abroad, and to what end? To destroy Russian carters' means of livelihood!

Foreign capitalists alone would profit. But why should they? For the purposes of domestic trade the sleigh transport was good enough, since snow was ample and hard on Russian roads six months of the year. The other half of the time there were the accommodating seas and rivers. Build a railroad to the Black Sea? Too absurd for words—to lay rails across the steppe where oxen were such a low-priced mode of communication!

A railroad between St. Petersburg and Moscow was not a natural necessity, he said, but an artificial luxury and thus a potential menace:

*Should there be an accidental breakdown, both capitals will

find themselves without food. This may give rise to complications that cannot even be foreseen."

Kankrin shuddered.

On the other hand (he picked up the trend once more), should the railroad function smoothly, it would but increase the latter-day tendency toward futile gadding about. The public would thus be involved in senseless expense. Decreasing both private and state incomes, the new roads would cause disaffection in the nation. They would aggravate the inconstancy of these modern times. Morals would be injured.

The Tsar listened heavily, the line of his lips hard. Slowly he was making up his mind. Kankrin's reputation was great—but that was just the reason to be rid of him. Nicholas argued back with a polite effort: Did the members of the committee realize the military use of a railroad? Quick movement of troops in an emergency, did they think of that? Finally, he jested:

"How pleasant may my journey be to my governor in Moscow, to take dinner with him and return by nightfall!"

Seeing the imperial will, Count Tol began to weaken. And Count Kankrin understood that there was no hope left. But he would go down fighting: "These railroads are follies. Within twenty years they will disappear from the face of the earth. Of course the whole world is against me, against my belief, and I know that we also shall have railroads. For, like cholera, they are sure to go around the globe. The Sire has set his heart on them, and they will be built. When I am dead he will remember me and my reluctance to adopt them!"

IV

Outside the rococo palace there was much ado. To the Russians, for the first time in years, a topic came like a manna; the mutes found they might talk. People high and low argued for and against the rumored innovation.

Not that their opinion was asked by the Tsar. The conversation was not encouraged; neither, however, was it forbidden, provided it did not become too loud or too bold.

What was the new monster for? For speed. The Russians shook their shaggy heads, whispering in cautious folk wisdom:

"The slower you go, the farther you be."

The iron steed will not snort—the holy fathers of the true church had never preached or written about it, and mere men could not create a thing unforecasted by the saints.

Noblemen talked and worried the most. Those who bred horses in the steppes were afraid that with the coming of the railroad they would lose their trade. Those who raised oats for sale had similar apprehensions. Owners of villages with the tradition of generations of skillful coachmen and postilions feared that the value of their serfs would fall, that the earnings brought by their human property would dwindle to a pittance. Sellers of wines and beers at roadside stops glumly viewed their future.

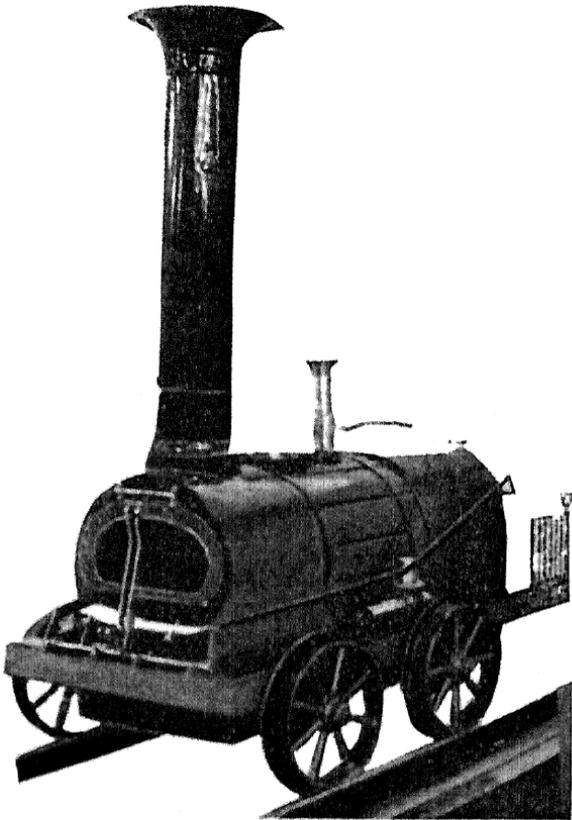
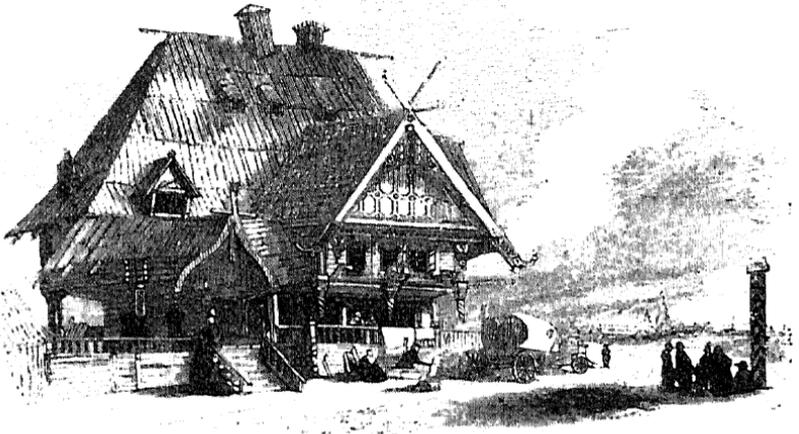
Patriots lamented certain details of the proposal. Alexander Pushkin, the great poet, wrote to a friend:

"Russia cannot afford to throw out three million rubles on an experiment. This business of the new road concerns private people—let them worry. All that should be promised them is a monopoly for twelve or fifteen years. A railroad from Moscow to Nizhni-Novgorod would have been more essential than one from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Of course I am not against railroads, but I do not cherish governmental participation in the work. Some objections with regard to railroads are impervious to argument—the snow difficulty, for instance. A special machine should be invented for this."

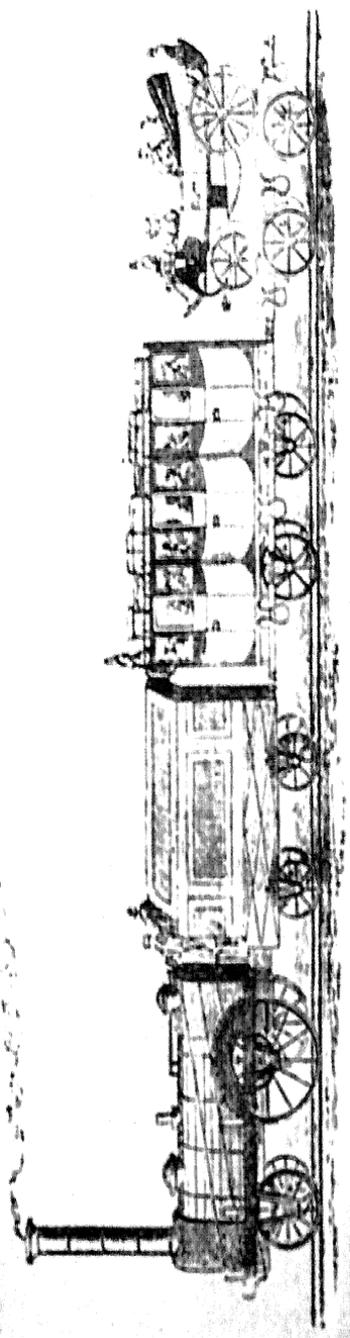
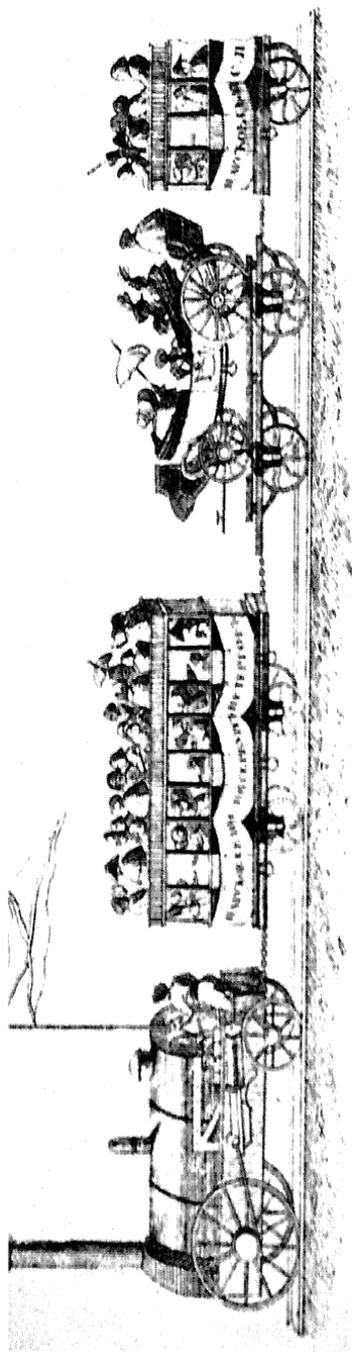
But the poet's opinion was not courted by the Tsar.

Nicholas was ready to act. The new idea would be given its first brief trial. The line between the two capitals would be postponed while a short road between St. Petersburg and the suburban Tsarskoye Selo was built. Gerstner was summoned. Nicholas said to him:

"There is one thing I will insist on. You will most likely need foreign experts to help you in this work. You may bring them from abroad but not before you consult my chief of gendarmerie about each one of them. Moreover, not a single French subject is to be brought. I do not need those gentlemen."



Top: A station house on a Russian post-road in the 1830s-'40s.
Bottom: The first Russian locomotive built by Cherepanov, the mechanic of the Ural region, in 1833.



From contemporary Russian Periodicals

The first Tarskoye Seio railroad train as it was envisaged by Gerstner in 1836 (top), and the same train when it actually ran in the fall of 1837 (bottom). Note the addition, to the actual train, of something that looks like a tender.

The French had staged a revolution some five years earlier, with the result that a bourgeois king was ruling them, Louis Philippe of Orleans, a man of suspiciously democratic tendencies who carried an umbrella and shook hands with everybody; not Louis but Parisian journals governed France.

It was quite another and safe matter with the Austrians: the railroad builder might bring as many of those as he wanted, for they were good monarchists indulging in no constitutional fancies. If any of them were in the Austrian state service the Tsar would allow them corresponding grades in his steep ladder of ranks.

V

Thus the iron mount pranced into holy Russia.

Its terminal at Pavlovsk, a short distance beyond Tsarskoye Selo, was a hall of entertainment, or rather a group of halls, amid the pleasant alleys and sharp fragrance of a pine grove. The grove, of English-park style, had been created by Cameron, an English master, and Gonzago, an Italian decorator. The cluster of station buildings was done also after Western models; it included a ballroom, a concert hall, buffets of refreshment, billiard rooms, fountains, also rooms for travelers. This struck Kankrin's wry sense of humor.

"In other countries," he remarked, "railroads connect important points of trade and industry, but we build our first line directly into a tavern."

The lower classes of the capital clung to the rumor of the Metropolitan's refusal to bless the new railroad. Yet, in the fall of 1837, the line began to function.

Locomotives were of British make. Ten Englishmen and two Belgians put the machines together, and showed the ways of fueling and running these wonders. The Russian authorities gave each beast-on-wheels a fancy name; here flew the Arrow, and hooted the Hero, and hastened the Swift One, and swayed the Eagle, and stomped the Elephant, and crouched the Lion. At first, steam was used on Sundays and high holidays. Weekdays,

horses were harnessed to the two railroad cars and two ordinary *chars-à-bancs*.

The following spring there was so much traffic that steam was used throughout the week. Crowds came to gape at the wheeled miracle that carried the fashionable passengers so smoothly and speedily. To clear the tracks, an organ was installed on each locomotive, in front of the chimney. A conductor turned the crank, playing loud tunes. At Pavlovsk the rush was so constant that the hallkeepers ran out of supplies—out of everything from bread to champagne.

By such success Nicholas was heartened. The Tsar often junketed over the line, with his family and select guests, in his personal carriage placed upon a platform.

Yes, success was not to be doubted. Nicholas again called a committee to consider the project of a St. Petersburg-Moscow railroad. He listened to fast-ebbing objections. Let us ponder the American experience, he ordered; let us send two of our officers to that distant country.

VI

Two colonels of the engineering troops, Kraft and Melnikov, were selected. From the summer of 1839 to the summer of 1840 the pair traveled over the roads of America, visiting stations and shops, climbing locomotives, gathering blueprints and figures.

Early in 1842 the committee in St. Petersburg heard their report: a long-distance railroad was feasible in Russia, and Major George Washington Whistler was the best man to help build it. The committee at once recalled that the American Minister, Colonel Charles Stewart Todd, had recommended the very same man. This Whistler was considered America's brightest pioneer of railroads, for not only did he run surveys and construction but he also excelled in the organization of the traffic and the rolling-stock repairs. At one time as many as six lines were said to have been under his charge or supervision. A rare man.

And so it was voted. The legendary Vistler or Uistler (the Russians were baffled by W) was to be invited; the contract to be

signed by Bodisco, the Tsar's Minister in Washington; a special agent, Major Bouttatz, to be detailed across the ocean to bring the American.

Franz von Gerstner, and not Whistler, might have got this job, but shortly after he had completed the Pavlovsk road he went to America—to study the Yankees' railroads, steamboats, and banks—and it was amid these engrossing researches that, in 1840, he died.

And even were he alive, it was doubtful whether he would have got the new appointment. For German-speaking men of learning were increasingly suspect in the Tsar's land: a rumor had spread that there were philosophers among men who spoke and wrote German with a university accent.

An American would have been appointed almost through a process of elimination. A second-rate Russian poet, lick of boot polish at the court, summed up the Tsar's feelings neatly:

"Each new idea is a delusion, Frenchmen are scoundrels, German philosophy is stupidity, and all together spells liberalism."

VII

Early in 1842 Nicholas made it known unofficially that a railroad between the two capitals would be built. Not three or four but thirty-four million rubles would be called for, and he was prepared to spend that much.

Yet the opposition of Tol and particularly Kankrin had been so strong that a show was needed—a show of support on the part of true Russians who would gain from the novelty.

With the rising class of merchants the Tsar occasionally and grudgingly flirted. They, the moneybags, were useful when he wanted to humble his thick-skinned bureaucrats. This time they were handy, indeed: Nicholas arranged for a delegation of seventeen St. Petersburg merchants to come to him with thanks for the iron horse. They were to bow and say that commerce flourished only because His Majesty took measures to protect it: thank you, Sire, for the railroad, for this yet another imperial gift to Russia.

He thought that on this occasion he would best prove his benevo-

lence by affecting simplicity. He received the merchant-subjects not in the throne hall but in his study, a surtout instead of sovereign purple or a uniform clothing his big-limbed figure. He took care to speak to them in a language devoid of foreign phrase. But he was too anxious. Before any of the tradesmen could say a word, he was thanking them for their unuttered thanks, he was orating:

"I had to struggle against superstitions as well as against persons. Yet nothing could stop me once I myself was convinced that this matter was useful and necessary. St. Petersburg has been scolded because it is far at Russia's end, too far from the Empire's center. Now this will be mended. Thanks to the railroad, St. Petersburg will be in Moscow, and Moscow will find itself at Cronstadt."

This last was a barb at the hated Britishers: look you, foxy Albion—the inner strength of the Muscovites will henceforth back the batteries of Cronstadt!

"But man is mortal," Nicholas warned. The heir-apparent, the future Alexander II, was standing by, a stocky, pasty-faced young man, his sad eyes like those of a long-suffering bullock. Pointing to him, the Tsar went on: "Therefore, to be assured of ultimate completion of this great undertaking, I have appointed him to chairmanship of the railroad committee. Should I not be fated to, he will finish the work."

He then urged the merchants to be active and honest and thus assist the government. Out of the fullness of their Russian hearts, the longbeards wept. The next day and the next, as they told the story of the interview to their friends and customers, they wept again. It was good business.

Now that the stage was set, Nicholas issued his official ukase: The railroad was to be built. To the advantage and glory of Russia—with God's blessing.

VIII

When the final railroad-building committee was formed, Lieutenant General Destrem found himself a member. He was a

Frenchman, once upon a time proudly serving Napoleon himself. In 1810 he and three other engineers had been lent by Bonaparte to Alexander I, and of the quartette it was Destrem who had risen in the Russian service most steadily and permanently, by means not always scrupulous. He was opposed to railroads because he excelled in the technique of canals. He bribed a Russian editor to ridicule Stephenson's creation, and himself publicly lectured on the subject of Railroads Being of No Advantage.

Nicholas knew his views, yet included him in the committee. The Tsar enjoyed seeing his officers cringe in sudden contradiction of their own opinions when such opinions turned out to be counter to his wishes. Destrem, the enemy of the railroad, would have to help build it.

The editor bought by Destrem was a reptile. His soul, like his writing, was an alloy of the pedantic and the putrid. So now he, too, changed front: he wrote that he was moved to tears by the very thought that the railroad would give the Tsar's subjects the priceless chance to order and hear one mass for the Little Father's health in the Kazansky Cathedral of St. Petersburg, and the same evening another mass for the same worthy purpose in the Kremlin of Moscow!

The other foes of the rail were one by one withdrawing. Kan-krin was ailing and meddled with business of state less and less. In the spring of 1842 Count Tol died, and in August his place as Minister of Communications was taken by Count Kleinmichel—an amazing personality, of whom more anon.

Chapter Three

AS THE steamer bore Whistler eastward on the windswept Baltic, he remembered:

Anna had been happy at Lowell, but not he. She loved the English far more than he did. Lowell's upper circles were England transplanted, and she was flattered by the way she and Whistler were accepted by the Kirk Bootts—the Bootts who practically owned the town, who had created its canals and manufactories. Whistler used to be Boott's chief engineer, but he was heartsore at the little amount of railroading at that job.

His compensation used to be three thousand dollars a year and a rent-free house—the boxlike roomy place in Worthen Street where Jimmie was born. Their friends thought that the financial arrangements were very fine, but Whistler's ties to Lowell were lukewarm. He admitted his contrariness:

“I always thought of other times, other associates.”

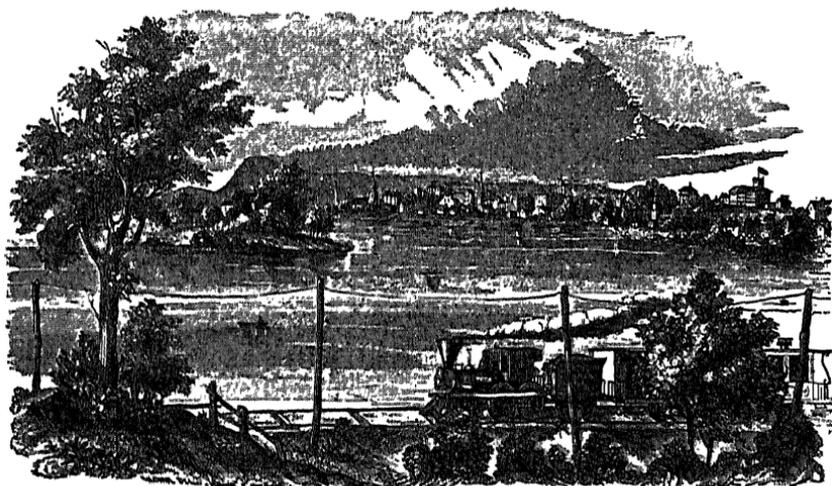
In Lowell he thought of railroading times, of work with such bittersweet harum-scarums as William McNeill. In 1837 Whistler and his family were overtaken by the general calamity of the times. And yet he chose precisely that year to sever at last his connection with Boott. For, although the panic had stopped railroad building in the rest of the country, New England was the hardy exception—new roads were being stretched in her several states as independent entities, not as mere feeders to the all-too-popular canals. When he moved his kin and goods from the grimy Lowell to the neat Connecticut town of Stonington, Whistler had nothing in the world but the furniture of his house.

The furniture alone! As he surveyed it with scorn he thought he was being forehanded. He must provide for his family more lastingly than he could at Lowell. Not that the years with Boott were a total loss. In that dark shop he had experimented with Stephenson's models; he had learned more about locomotives than was at the time apparent.

In those years Mac, too, had grown in stature as engineer. A good partner he would prove. But Mac learned to drink. His business habits had never been sterling, and now the cup did not improve them. In 1839 the Western Railroad people said they had no confidence in Mac's business ways, although they did acknowledge his skill as engineer. They made it a condition that Whistler should be the chief.

It was nevertheless a pleasure to build that Western Railroad of Massachusetts which completed the iron route between Boston and Albany—America's first through railroad of importance. There was that narrow river valley in the Berkshires, between Springfield and Pittsfield, a barrier generally considered to be beyond control. Captain Marryat, the English writing man then touring the country, in angry disbelief spoke of those insane persons who would try to hoist rails and cars up the steep hills of western Massachusetts. But Whistler opened his office at Springfield, brought the family from Stonington, and serenely tackled the problem.

He built the section despite all the difficulties, and it was that span of work more than any other in his long record that impressed the visiting Russians. The Springfield house was not yet



Springfield, Mass., in the 1840s-'50s

properly settled when, in 1840, the two strange colonels came to Whistlers' fireside, bearing with them the fateful praise for the Major.

II

Pacing the deck, looking at the pastel Baltic sky, he remembered:

It was but this past spring of 1842 that he first received letters officially inviting him to Russia. The thought from the very start was repelling, terrifying. He sought Joseph Swift's advice.

General Joseph Gardner Swift was the best and truest friend Whistler ever had. The eldest brother of Mary, Whistler's first wife, he had protected them both when she eloped with Whistler, then but a poor lieutenant with scarce prospects. At all times, in sorrow or joy, he could count on Joseph's understanding and sympathy.

Joseph said, yes, go to Russia. This advice decided Whistler. Joseph's idea was that Whistler would be absent from America for a few short though hard years—hard because the family would remain behind. It was in May that Swift met Bodisco, the Russian Minister, and made with him arrangements for Whistler's services and the exact salary: sixty thousand Russian rubles a year, which meant twelve thousand dollars in American money—four times his old Lowell salary. This indeed would provide for the family.

A small, sharp panic of belated regret seized Whistler as he bade farewell to Anna and the children—out there, in the house amid his own lovely shrubbery, in the valley of the Connecticut River, now in the long ago.

III

To divert his thoughts, came the sudden harbingers of Russia.

The hitherto desert expanse of the Gulf of Finland was all at once alive with frigates and sloops. This was the Tsar's navy, out to exercise its men and cadets after the long winter months in

the ice-locked harbors. The ships disappeared as abruptly as they had come, but from then on there were other, however infrequent, signs of life on the bluish-gray horizon: sail-merchantmen, large steam packets and small steam pyroscaphs, and at last, between the sky and the water, the uncertain line of land—the wet flatland of Ingria.

The line wavered less and less, and presently sprouted a few birch trees weakly reaching out to the pale sun. The coast came nearer, showing its gray earth and dull moss. At a stroke, there rose a forest of masts and a mass of granite. The steamer entered Cronstadt, the silent fortress of many ramparts and parapets crowned with batteries, the brooding port and door to St. Petersburg. A depressing hush fell among the passengers.

Small boats of a military air detached themselves from the tall blank walls of the harbor and approached the steamer. At the oars were unkempt fellows in gray prison-like capotes of coarse wool, their skin of green or yellow hue, their faces heavy and dead to the world, their sunken eyes staring but unseeing: these were sailormen of the Tsar's navy, unwilling warriors of the sea. They brought military and customs officials to inspect the passengers and seal up the bulkier items of the cargo.

The officers came aboard. They were a pompous and dandified group, smelling strongly of musk and ambergris, their French rapid and their laughter loud. They broke into Russian as they shouted arrogant commands. Stationing sentinels at every turn, the officers clattered down the stairs to the main saloon, to partake of the spirits shrewdly proffered by the captain. Then, spreading innumerable papers over the table, they proceeded to ask of the skipper and his passengers a string of impudently detailed and intimate questions, and wrote much and with many flourishes. Behind them stood their sallow, half-famished orderlies and servants, those thin-faced mouzhiks in ill-fitting piebald uniforms, a browbeaten lot smelling of sweat, cabbage, and leather.

At last the query was over, the lighter baggage examined and mostly passed. The heavier pieces, locked and stamped, were to remain at Cronstadt for a closer examination at some vague fu-

ture. Passengers and the approved trunks and carpetbags were transferred to a small dirty steamboat. Up the Neva for three hours chugged the pyroscaph.

Crowding at the railings, the passengers watched for the first glimpse of St. Petersburg. Past them, the river traffic was lively and various. From the capital to Cronstadt barges and cutters were bringing to sea-going vessels hills and stacks of Russian export: wheat and rye, tallow and lard, flax and flaxseed, deal and other timber, hemp and sailduck and cordage. In the same direction as the pyroscaph, toward St. Petersburg, lighters carried from Cronstadt bags of crushed Havana sugar, barrels of coffee and tobacco, baskets of fruit, and casks of wood oil. There were on their decks and in their holds also cargoes of such foreign goods as royal paper for Russia's myriad offices, incense for her numerous churches, marble for her palaces, silk and woolen stuffs for her nobility; as well as dyewood, cotton, rice, lead, tin, quicksilver, chalk, hard coal, and many other wares.

Swampy ground spread on both sides of the wide river. Gradually the marshes gave way to stone quays. The capital itself was yet unseen somewhere in the azure dimness of the distance, but already, over the river, as if out of nothing, there appeared blue and green and gold onion-shaped domes, gilt spires tapered and pierced into the sky, and huge cupolas that looked like temple tops but in reality were roofs of public buildings. Eerily the vista floated upon the waters, an oriental tableau incongruous under these northern heavens.

Closer—and now not only the heads but also the bodies of the buildings became visible: pseudo-Greek colonnades of schools and barracks, long and white; sentried porticos of palaces; antique statues and massive copies of sphinxes. Swiftly canals yawned by, and avenues where there were crowds of many more men than women, and of many more military than civilians, while the traffic of wheels was denser than that of pedestrians. This was St. Petersburg.

The pyroscaph anchored at the English Quay. A new set of musk-fragrant officers, mostly of the police and the customs, took charge of the passengers and their hand baggage. The questioning

inspection flared up once more, with an energy frightening to witness, and again goose quills rasped over multifarious documents. At length, printed sheets were distributed—instructions on how a foreigner was to behave while in the Tsar's land—and the perspiring, bewildered travelers were free upon the shores and streets of the capital.

Major Bouttatz led the way for Whistler. Spared much of the unpleasant scrutiny, eyed with as much distant curiosity as he eyed these Slavs, the American followed his guide into the city to the dwelling that awaited him: a few rooms on the ground floor of Colonel Todd's house. It was near the Quay, on Galernaya Ulitsa or the Street of Galleys.

IV

He looked at the city in a somewhat cursory way, and plunged into work. He inspected the region where the railroad was planned. Back in the capital, he sat through interminable conferences. He was introduced to a legion of Russian officials; into his hands were shoved reports signed by row upon row of Russian names. To a Westerner, these names on paper, in their Latin-alphabet transliteration, seem like so many typographical errors. In sound they are like water gurgling out of a bottle. At first Whistler thought he would never be able to tell one of his new associates from another, or one name from another.

He learned that the Emperor had appointed him to the Temporary Technical Commission in the department of railroads. The heir-apparent was supposed to have something to do with the sittings, but he never appeared; as fellow members Whistler found nine generals and three colonels. All were gentlemen because they never argued with the American. That is, all except a certain General Chevkin, a slightly deformed man with a sharp taste for controversy.

The members passed important matters with hardly any dispute, but were always careful to state in the protocol that since Major Uistler took upon himself the responsibility they could not disapprove. In matters of no consequence they would talk for

hours. Several of them spoke English but were not of the garrulous kind. The proceedings were thus either in Russian or French. Of Russian the Major knew little or nothing, French he understood but did not speak, so he talked in English which most members understood.

General Chevkin wanted for himself the chief direction of this first Russian railroad of importance. And, truly, he did much to start the work, admitted Whistler. In the beginning the American considered Chevkin a man of much drive and some talent. They fell out gradually. The Russian, trying to cultivate the American, was at the start extremely polite and attentive. Whistler had been warned of his ambitious character, but he heard little good of any Russian, and so resolved to form his own opinion. He saw that this man was among the most active natives, and accordingly thought he liked the General, but he soon changed his mind.

Chevkin could not swallow what he considered insults. An insult was every decision of the commission not in tune with his own expressed opinion. He could not conceal his mortification and at the first chance began the ireful Opposition of One. He argued with the monotonous insistence of a mosquito. In time he opposed every single thing that Whistler proposed, yet to no effect, save that it annoyed the American and sometimes delayed action.

The captious General Chevkin at first said he knew English but later disclaimed it. Whistler sometimes wished the quibbler did understand English, and then again was thankful he did not, for on occasion it prevented useless debate. Presently Whistler paid no mind to the wrangler, for Chevkin's opposition was always put down in spite of all his talk. The American thus gained a reputation of being cool under verbal fire. In private he smiled over it.

It helped, of course, that the chairman sided with the American on all prime questions while the other members were silent or talked indifferently. Early in the sittings the chairman did argue with the foreigner, but after the very first dispute Count Kleinmichel dropped a casual remark:

"The chairman will never again oppose you."

And so it happened.

Everything had the appearance of a beautifully ordered show. Even Chevkin's opposition seemed to be not without a certain pre-arrangement. For the omnipotent Kleinmichel did nothing to stop the singular General. On the contrary, Whistler noticed that the Count was rather pleased with Chevkin's stubbornness in being a jackass to himself and a slight handicap to the American.

V

Count Kleinmichel was a riddle to Whistler. Here was the strongest yet one of the most unpopular officials in Russia. "*The most unpopular,*" stressed Whistler in letters to America. Everyone hated him. Behind his back all abused him. But all admitted his success while decrying the ruthlessness of his measures.

The evil shadow of the latter years of Alexander I was that Tsar's favorite, Arakcheyev. He in turn had Peter Kleinmichel as his fair-haired aide. In March, 1814, at twenty-one, while in France, Kleinmichel saved Grand Dukes Nicholas and Michael from falling prisoner to Napoleon's troops. At twenty-three he was a colonel. When Nicholas became Tsar, Kleinmichel brought to him a betrayal of some deep secrets of Arakcheyev—who was promptly shelved to give place to his erstwhile assistant.

Kleinmichel was soon a general, and increasingly known for a cruel trickster. When he hated he was implacable. The shock of triumph seemed to have crazed him, and at length his enormities were the hushed talk of the Empire. There was the saying: "Arakcheyev is gone, but his teeth remain."

In 1831 Kleinmichel was prominent in the quelling of the Polish rebellion: he personally questioned captives; methodically, with his German attention to every detail, he arranged for their public flogging. In 1839 came his most spectacular opportunity: a mighty fire gutted the Winter Palace, leaving but a shell; Nicholas wanted it to be rebuilt in time for the customary Easter reception, a few months thence; Kleinmichel promised to have it done. He gathered thousands of serf-artisans and drove them in

a murderous frenzy. Gigantic ovens were constructed to dry the ceilings and walls as fast as these were completed. While outside sub-zero temperatures prevailed, inside the palace the many squads of men labored with blocks of ice fastened to their heads to keep them from suffocation. Hundreds caught pneumonia and died, or were crushed by falling brick and marble, but others were driven in, and at last—in time for the cursed reception—the palace was restored. From the grateful Tsar, Kleinmichel received his title of Count, a gift of one million rubles, and a specially coined gold medal, inscribed: *Zeal overcomes everything*.

Before long, among his many duties, was that of adopting the bar-sinister children of Nicholas and Nelidova. The Tsar's mistress-in-chief was a kinswoman of Kleinmichel's wife. He inched nearer to his Emperor through this lady whom he flattered to her pretty face but at whom behind her back he muttered:

"Carrion!"

It was not in Kleinmichel's practice to refuse a job. Until his latest appointment as head of the railroad construction he had hated the new invention. He had not used the train to Tsarskoye Selo, preferring his slower but safer turnout. But when he learned of the appointment he ordered the coachman to speed him to the station built by Gerstner, so as to see for himself how the iron mount looked and acted.

The Count's tasks were wide-ranged, and apparently the Tsar would never cease entrusting him with newer and yet more unexpected assignments. In 1842-43 Kleinmichel was only fifty, but it seemed as if he were ruling the nation since time out of mind. He was regarded as a scourge sent by God for Russia's sins, as an Attila whose brains were no whit greater than would ordinarily fit a small jailkeeper. Nicholas piled him high with the strong drink of honors and power, made a statesman out of him mainly to humiliate the nation. The Count was a battering ram of steel needed by the Tsar to break down what Nicholas held to be a wall of inertia barring the lucid path of his imperial will. The Tsar's hound—such was the whispered nickname for Kleinmichel. An underground telegraph cable led from the Winter Palace to

the Count's house. The popular jest had it that the Tsar kept his hound on a galvanic chain.

Each Thursday he went to see his master. The silver spurs of his patent-leather boots tinkled in victory as he ascended the marble stairs to the Emperor's study. Yet, at the threshold, Kleinmichel would stop in a sudden spell of worry verging on fear. Thus it would be before each meeting face to face with Nicholas. The tyrant terrified even his closest henchman.

Kleinmichel was tall. Above the raspberry-hued collar of the uniform-coat his bald spot was moonlike, the face sharp, and the stare of the round gray eyes perpetually angry. It was a strange thing but he seemed far handsomer when in a rage than on the rarer occasions when he smiled. He spoke in abrupt sentences, and this in anger resembled a roar.

Often, on a plaza or in an office, there was Kleinmichel's jaundiced shout:

"I beg your pardon!"

When thus addressed, an unfortunate subordinate knew that he, not the shouter, was presumed to be guilty and begging pardon. It was of small consolation to remember the historic origin of this shout. A legend dated the Count's mannerism back to his days as humble aide to Arakcheyev. An important document had been lost by young Kleinmichel. The superior had yelled at the aide in vile billingsgate, and had finally spat at him. Young Kleinmichel had bowed his head, had wiped his face, and had said: "I beg your pardon."

Such had been his schooling, and now he gave its bitter taste to his own underlings, with a sadistic delight carrying to new uses the very phrase of his old groveling.

His conviction seemed to be that during the official hours he had to behave like a hurricane, that if one wanted to rule one had to be a beast.

A lucky few were now and again invited to his house, celebrated for its furniture of costly mahogany. He had a chapel of his own, where a priest would officiate vespers for the guests, who would afterward repair to the drawing room and its green-cloth card tables. At home he was quite another man: polite, hospitable.

But here, at home, he was by the side of his wife who, to the guests, seemed the height of kindness. And naturally, the guests were those few in the Empire whom he either liked or needed.

It was nevertheless said that at times he displayed a certain amount of fairness. Upon finding that he had scolded an innocent man he would do something to reward the sufferer. Indeed, some bold and seeking officials tried to provoke him into undeserved abuse in the hope of subsequent amends. Occasionally he would listen to objections and explanations. If an officer, on receiving the Count's order, lost his nerve and could not answer, Kleinmichel shouted in a vain attempt to soothe the robot:

"I'm speaking conditionally! Conditionally, d'you understand? Do as much as you can!"

Periodically he rode out to view whatever public works were in progress. He bellowed his demands; he punished and awarded fitfully. He arranged his itinerary so that it led close by his magnificent estate of Pochev, in the southwestern province of Chernigov—a present from the Tsar. Here he fished, or hunted hare, or was amused by his aides-de-camp. When it was time to depart, the local marshal of the nobility hurried in to kiss the Count on the chest and shoulder as the great man draped a travel-time *rotonde*, or round cloak, over his uniform.

Mounted guards, headed by a captain of the rural police, galloped after Kleinmichel's equipage. Everywhere fresh horses, coachmen, and postilions were held in readiness; as many as twelve hundred horses in short relays were used for him along a distance of but four hundred *versts*. Landlords, eager to be near the Tsar's satrap if only for an hour, masqueraded as *serf-coachers*. They had to suffer in silence when Kleinmichel's unsuspecting courtiers urged them to better speed by poking saber hilts into the noble backs. And all along the road Kleinmichel inspected, shouted, praised, threatened, demoted.

On return to St. Petersburg he wrote detailed orders describing his tours in terms of fanciful cursing. When the orders were yet a novelty, their copies circulated in the coffeehouses of Russia as reading matter of rare treat. Some gentlemen subscribed to these orders as if to racy newspapers.

The engineers of Russia had a catalogue of Kleinmichel's idiosyncrasies, and took care to sidestep them. Thus, in their reports to the Count, they were particular not to mention the word *meridian*. They knew that he disliked the word as a piece of gross fiction, an invention and fantasy of the engineering profession. It all went back to the time when Kleinmichel, on coming to Moscow, had noticed that the local clocks were half an hour ahead of his St. Petersburg watch. Summoning the city engineer, he upbraided him for such inexcusable neglect. The engineer replied that the clocks differed because the meridian of the old capital differed from that of St. Petersburg. The Count was livid:

"Thank God, I wheeled all over Russia—tens of thousands of versts, sir!—and nowhere on earth did I see meridians! Well then, according to you every scabby townlet will have a meridian of its own? Too much honor, sir!"

Under such circumstances he loved to parrot piously, after Nicholas: "I don't need learned men! What I need is men who will carry out my orders!" He came to school examinations to tear and swear and invoke the shackles of Siberia. He contradicted himself as he asked questions or gave orders, so that he met himself coming and going, and every time he encountered his own shadow he bowed in deep respect. If nobody loved him he would love himself.

The Tsar knew that his henchman was hated by the populace. Worse luck for the populace! A lady, high in the Emperor's service, said to a friend: "Be assured that Kleinmichel's power will grow as the hatred and scorn for him rise." The Count himself had no illusions as to his popularity. An officer—a toady—once came for leave to publish Kleinmichel's portrait. The Count asked:

"You wish to put it on sale?"

"Exactly so, Your Excellency!"

"I wager," sneered the almighty one, "that for my portrait you'll get not a single farthing from anyone. You'll lose your investment."

Another time, at the end of a trying inspection, a subaltern scraped and bowed.

"A pity, Your Excellency, a thousand pities, that you are leaving us so soon."

"Don't lie," Kleinmichel replied coldly, halting in the re-entry of his carriage. "You as well as all of you"—he turned to the other men of the assembled division—"have but one thought: thank the Lord, this dog is at last leaving."

There was a dirty lining to his foggy soul; he openly thieved public moneys, and other men's lives were like dust to him. He helped himself generously while acting as the Tsar's cornucopia of favors, decorations, and gratuities. Men dripped greedy saliva before Kleinmichel, stretching their hands toward a St. Anne or a St. Stanislas—those effulgent orders, those marks of rise in society and service; toward a diamond ring or a rich snuffbox from the Tsar's treasures; toward a colonelcy, a generalship, an ambassador's post. They gossiped and intrigued, they indulged in back-biting and back-stabbing, all to gain condescension in the Count's glassy eyes.

Such was the chief turnkey of the nation, the Tsar's right fist, the Tsar's eye and rod. Such was Count Peter Kleinmichel, the very sound of whose name was like the sickening roll of drums drowning the swish of split birch-canes upon the bared backs of the serfs and soldiers.

Such was Whistler's boss.

Chapter Four

THE first letter from home to reach Whistler in Russia brought an incredible blow: on July the tenth his bright-eyed Kirkie had died at Springfield, of scarlet fever. Whistler's gloom on those oppressive days and nights in London had not been groundless.

Little Kirkie was dead, he who was named after Kirk Boott of Lowell. Sweet-eyed Kirkie, so handsome that strangers on the streets would stop for a second glimpse of his features, of his silken ringlets unshorn the four years of his life. He had been ill less than a month, poor Anna wrote. It was on a beautiful Sunday morning that he passed away. In later years Anna was to persuade herself that, dying, he clasped his hands in prayer, and raised his lovely eyes in ecstasy, "as though he saw what we could not," and that his last words were: "Mother, I want to go to heaven."

The London feeling returned to Whistler. In a lowness of spirits he walked the streets of the capital, listened to orders, gave orders, sat through conferences, took his meals, and spent lonely nights in Todd's house on Galernaya. Was Kirkie's death not a sign from on high? Should he not resign this position and sail back to the family?

One day he was stopped breathless by the sight of a small boy in the arms of a peasant woman. The child was so much like Kirkie! He was some three or four years old; his eyes were black and sparkled uncannily in the same way; his forehead was remarkably like Kirkie's. Whistler reached for his purse and gave the woman some money. She knelt before him, touching the pavement with her brow and kissing his feet before in anger and embarrassment he could retreat.

But he did feel better from then on. He met the pair again—the woman in her smelly sheepskin, clutching the boy to her bosom—and this time Whistler made signs to her to go into Colonel Todd's yard. He then ordered his servants to make the child clean of its lice and bring it to his rooms. The child's name

was Andrey, but the American pronounced it Andrea. It was his sad satisfaction to keep the boy on his knees for hours, while the peasant woman waited in the yard or the servants' quarters.

Again and again they came to repeat the rite, each time the woman bowing low as she received her payment, each time Whistler feeling an ineffable melancholy, yet growing calmer.

II

In the fall he wrote to Anna and the two Swifts that he had made up his mind to remain in Russia until the railroad was completed. Should he bring the family to Russia?

Of the two brothers, Joseph was noncommittal, but the younger, William, in his blunt way wrote back that St. Petersburg was too expensive a place for Anna and the children, that Whistler would save more by enduring his temporary separation. The Major did not seem to relish such advice, while Anna did not even ask the Swifts' opinion.

Little love was wasted between Anna and the brothers of her predecessor. William in particular disliked her. To his brother Joseph he admitted: "I am sorry that I do not like her, but I cannot like her."

He said she was artful and selfish. She had quite a fancy of making a figure and was not careful enough in money matters. So charged Captain William H. Swift, who liked orderliness because he was a military man, and advocated money-saving, for not in vain did he serve as the American financial adviser to Baring Brothers, the British bankers.

Most sorely of all, however, he was outraged by Anna's treatment of Deborah, the late Mary's only daughter and the Swifts' favorite niece. Take, he said, the incident of the preceding December: he had had a hard time prevailing upon Anna to let him take away the girl for a holiday. When he had at length won the point, Debo—he reported to brother Joseph—was like a bird let loose from its cage. Anna for some reason thought it best to keep the girl everlastingly within the precincts of her own house and sight. Recalling the rosebloom beauty of the romance between

Whistler and the late Mary Swift, he compared it with the calculated marriage into which, upon Mary's death, Anna McNeill enticed the widower.

Whistler had met Mary at West Point; she had come there with her father, Dr. Foster Swift, the school's surgeon, and had taken cadets' hearts by storm. George Washington Whistler wooed Mary with fire and ingenuity not devoid of humor. The accomplished flutist that he was at an early age (Pipes was his nickname at West Point) he serenaded her, holding the instrument ever so handsomely, his eye twinkling at her with such mischief and gayety. He was never at a loss. Once she saw him straddling a brass cannon as punishment for some minor infraction of the school rules. To escape disgrace in her lovely eyes he quickly pulled out a handkerchief and proceeded to clean and polish the gun, thus pretending that in his position astride it there was nothing worse than a routine duty. In 1821, both so young, they eloped.

It had been a true romance! Whereas ten years later Anna schemed and plotted prosaically.

Anna, however, never denied that she had set her cap at the Major. Yet, to her, the story of her marriage to Whistler was also romantic. She had known Mary—the Swifts and the Whistlers were close friends of the McNeills—and Mary had trusted her even though she must have noticed that Anna was in love with the attractive officer. Anna had early vowed to herself that she would some day marry George Washington Whistler. For Mary had been ailing, and would soon die. Before that fateful winter day in 1827 Mary Whistler had called her husband to the sickbed to bid him: "If you marry the second time, it must be to Miss McNeill."

This was the story Anna told in later years.

During his widowhood she had sweetly called him Brother George, she had demonstrated a motherly interest in his orphans, and finally, in 1831, succeeded. For he had been lonely and helpless with the three children. She had caught him on the rebound, the Swifts said.

The stepchildren were no great joy to her. For one thing they

were sickly. In 1840 there was the mortal illness of her stepson Joe—named after his uncle Joseph Gardner Swift; the boy was in his fifteenth year when the tragedy overtook him. Of the two half-orphans alive in 1842, George William was twenty and thus the elder. He got along with his stepmother far better than Debo ever managed. He did this mostly by staying away from Anna. Since his father's departure for Russia he lived in Lowell, working in the old machine shop the same ten daily hours as any mechanic or apprentice. The youth said that the work agreed with his fragile health, and that he would stay in Lowell at least a year, as Russia was surely not for him.

Debo, too, was loath to leave the native shores for the far-off Russian horizons. But Anna, with her assured bearing, at a surprisingly early date, decided to take the family to their father. Debo was to come along.

The Swifts sided with Debo against Anna's determination and Whistler's loneliness, yet, since go the family would, William felt relieved—on Debo's account. This fond busybody of an uncle muttered that there was a difference, and a great difference at that, in the treatment of Debo while Whistler was home and while he was away. Yes, let her be near her father! For, in Whistler's presence, Anna treated the girl nigh as well as she did her own three boys—her Jimmie, Willie, and Charlie.

Still, carped William Swift, the second Mrs. Whistler should be of a sweeter mettle, she should ooze of hypocritical honey less, be a Christian more, if she wished to take Mary's place in Whistler's heart. She should be humanly, not officially, a mother to Debo. She should not be a despot. Was it not among the possibilities, William Swift asked of his brother Joseph, that a woman could feel toward a child as a parent would even though she were not the mother?

By early October of 1842 Anna broke up her Springfield household and sold the furniture. Winter, however, was a poor time to go to frozen Russia. She chose to move to Stonington till milder weather smiled, to that town of eighteenth-century sweetness and quiet where their kin, the Palmers, resided, and where the Whistlers had lived once before.

III

Heartened by the sight and babble of the little boy Andrea, by his own decision to remain, and most of all by the news that the next summer he might expect the arrival of Anna and the children, Whistler continued his work. Repeatedly, on foot and by horse, he covered the distance of the projected railroad, questioning, measuring, and taking notes.

He traveled along or near a *chaussée* that some years before had been built to connect the two capitals. Contemporary writers proclaimed it one of the best carriage-roads in Europe. St. Petersburg and the Tsar seemed to dominate this road from end to end. Bridges of the *chaussée* rested on granite pillars, upon which imperial arms were carved. The balustrades were wrought in iron, with golden eagles to relieve their somberness. Versts were told on small columns of darkish marble, with the Tsar's inevitable initial—the Latin H which was the Russian N—on each post. By the roadside, at intervals, stone benches invited pedestrians to rest under linden trees: the Tsar's gesture of benevolence. Each two or three miles a barrack house sheltered the Tsar's soldiers who were here to keep the road in repair. In cheerless villages the combined inns and posthouses were managed chiefly by Germans, petty officials of Kleinmichel's jurisdiction. The proverbial cleanliness of Teutons gave way before the squalor and vermin carried by the stream of Russian travelers. The inn rooms were loud with peremptory or drunken voices of passing superiors, and with magnificent yet queer frescoes on ceilings and tawdry ornaments on walls. The main chamber held the Tsar's portrait. Below the portrait, hair-sofas were alive with fleas and bedbugs. Past it, greasy waiters hastened with fly-kissed dishes. The best suite of rooms was locked against the emergency of the Tsar's passage. Whenever Nicholas traveled this way, the entire traffic was shied off the *chaussée* to the rough sideroads, so that he would have the route clear to his exalted self.

The villages along the highway were of monotonous appearance. Each house of rude logs had its invariable three windows

facing the street. There was neither yard nor tree nor fencing near the dwelling. Behind it, a pitiful patch was sometimes planted with potatoes or cabbages. Very few fruit trees could be seen anywhere along the distance. But churches were on the whole handsome and in fair repair, each one with a belfry and a dome, some with four tiny steeples around the onionlike cupola.

As he surveyed and commended, as he inspected and directed the future route of the iron brute, Whistler felt that in point of beauty the country between the two capitals was of no interest whatever. The vista seemed so uniform that he found it difficult to describe the route to his in-laws in America, who in their curiosity as engineers wrote to him constantly for details of his job. He knew of no landscape in America to which to compare this windless plain. It was a plain gradually and slightly rising toward Moscow.

IV

He journeyed along the *chaussée*, and away from it, and then back again over its wide ribbon. For many slow days he rode and walked until he was within sight of the white walls and turrets of the old capital, of the forty forties of Moscow's churches. Whistler was struck by the dissimilarity of these two capitals, old and new, which he was to bind.

Well he might.

For in St. Petersburg the palaces and houses were too alike, the colonnades too regular, the statues too heroic, and those lines of vast stony façades paralleling the swift Neva too regimented. Peter's city was built by one decree and not by a welter of many individual inclinations. It breathed neither coziness nor welcome. The new capital of nearly half a million inhabitants, the much-praised Semiramis of the North, was great and proud, certainly, but not at all warm. People who lived in St. Petersburg were penetrating and suspicious egotists, impersonal and calloused bureaucrats.

But while St. Petersburg was the capital of the Emperor, Moscow was the capital of the Russian people. No such bronze rider

as Falconet's statue of Peter the Great exhorted or threatened Moscow: the awesome monument belonged nowhere else but where it was—the Senate Plaza of St. Petersburg. While the new city was the cold and hostile brain of the Empire, the old city was the hospitable heart. A foreigner perhaps felt better in St. Petersburg than in Moscow, in this overgrown semi-barbarous village devoid of Western faces, of Western orderliness, of the prim-lined steeples of Western churches. The bulbous cupolas meant nothing to his religious feelings and memories. At times they looked grotesque to the point of garishness, and bulgingly round to the curve of obscenity.

From the Sparrow Hills, where Napoleon had once stood in vain awaiting keys to the conquered city, a traveler in 1842 beheld a sea of burnished blue-and-gold cupolas, glittering with starry ornaments and with gilded chains reaching from steeple to steeple; a labyrinth of walls and terraces, a maze of metallic roofs and painted tiles, confused and shapeless, yet with a definite beauty to its seeming chaos. A bizarre city, surely much closer to Asia than St. Petersburg could ever be! Although burned in 1812, and since then almost entirely rebuilt, the Moscow of the 1840s was much nearer to Russia's past than the northern capital could ever hope to become. The somber and naïve Kremlin, with its towers and battlements, its chapels of musty stone and copper domes, gave the older city a wild and truly medieval air. Indeed, to build it, the Tsars of Muscovy had called architects of medieval Italy and expiring Byzantium, and these had added to their own styles the splendor of Tataria as well as the wooden tone of Slavonia.

When a traveler of 1842 went into the city itself, into the narrow streets of cobble, and mingled with the people in their homes and bazaars and offices, he found how much freer, lazier, and more irregular were both the streets and the denizens of Moscow. In the stately log-and-stone houses dwelt big-bellied, long-bearded, loud-voiced merchants. In the mansions lived large-eating officials, retired and caustic functionaries, also careless-mannered nobles who wanted to keep away from the rigors of the St. Petersburg court, from the Tsar's sudden caprices or steady wrath.

Such was this old Moscow, the warm contrast to the precise oppressiveness of St. Petersburg.

Even so, both were of much beauty, however unmatched.

Whistler was impressed by both, although he could not describe them. He always complained that he could not describe places. He might have been able to draw some of this beauty, the way twenty-two years earlier he had drawn a fine view of Detroit. But in 1842 he was twenty-two years older and so much busier.

He had come to Russia to work.

V

Whistler said that in general the plain was flat. He warned, however, that in profile it occasionally promised heavy work for the roadmakers.

About midway on its progress toward Moscow the plain was crossed by the Valdai range. Geographers knew those hills well: here was the shed which divided the waters running south into the Volga and the Caspian Sea, and north into the Baltic. The hills did not rise higher than seven hundred feet above the sea level. They were broken but not abrupt. There were to be no tunnels—the American said that his railroad would be able to rise and pass over the hills in the direction of Moscow with a maximum grade of forty feet, and thus steeply in one place only. This particular grade would be about ten miles long. The task would be heavy, but not impossible. Weightier brunts had been carried by him at home, in the States.

He had heard so much of the Empire's dense woods, but in this region the growth of timber was small, not deserving in Whistler's opinion the name of woods: pine and spruce, poplar and slender birch, the same kind of vegetation as in the region about Lake Superior, only on a very small scale. Birch was the fuel of the country, and he never saw a stick over eight inches in diameter; mostly it was four to six inches. Of course, there was the problem of marshes —

Whistler noted that morasses covered the greater portion of the countryside on the way to Moscow. They varied from one to

three feet in depth, but in some places were fifteen to twenty. He would, however, overcome this.

But there was this matter of water. As the streams were exceedingly sluggish and few, and the plains so flat, he imagined the natural drainage as difficult. The whole formation was clay, worse luck. Yet, in time, he would settle all this.

For gain or loss the railroad would be built.

The surveying line was marked with guideposts and small signal towers. It cut across the chill beauty of fields, meadows, bogs, and groves—beauty to the Russians if not to Whistler. It sped amid the short grass and pale flowers of the north. At night, shrouds of fog rose above the landscape.

The men worked knee-deep in water and, soon enough, in snow. The marshy ground was treacherous in the summer but harmless in wintertime. Some of the Russians worked as if inspired, for being young some were enthusiastic. They were awed by Whistler; they were spurred on by his constant albeit flitting presence. This engineer, this American who was commonly rumored to be of astounding cleverness and knowledge, this guest-instructor should see for himself of what stuff his Russian disciples were made.

A short distance from the *chaussée* they met with bears, deer, moose, and wild goats. In the bogs, slim long-billed snipe fluttered up in alarm. Once the surveying line came to a lake with isles full of game. When the gentlemen of the party had time, a beast or a bird was leveled by a rifle-shot echoing and re-echoing in the wilderness.

In the provinces of Novgorod and Tver the woods were so thick (whatever Whistler's scornful opinion to the contrary) that the surveyors had to chop an avenue two Russian *sazhen* wide, which was all of fourteen English feet—a tremendous task and achievement to the Slav mind. In the dusk of the forest one could see the cleared sunlit path a long way off. To a few of the Russian engineer-surveyors assisting Whistler, the path seemed prophetic of a bright era cutting its mark into the interior of the Empire, spiting or skirting all handicaps.

At one place, much to their pleased surprise, they found traces

of some old surveying: a swath chopped and dug in the woods but by now pretty well grown over. This, they learned from ancient records, was a line once planned by Peter the Great as a short-cut between the two capitals for his cavalry and postchaises.

Tsar Nicholas I must have been gratified to hear of the discovery. For among his pet sayings there was this lying boast:

"I am completing Peter's work."

VI

Whistler submitted his report that the region between St. Petersburg and Moscow was ideally suited for a railroad, that it was hardly possible to find another case so remarkable as this one, of a long-distance area well adaptable for just such a line. The Tsar scrutinized the report, nodded heavily, and summoned the American to the Winter Palace.

On the Russian day of New Year's, which was really the Western thirteenth of January, 1843, Whistler for the first time was presented to the Emperor.

Nicholas was tall and lean. His chest was wide, his arms were rather long. His face had no blemishes; above the Roman nose there was a high baldish forehead. His glance was laboriously quick; his voice, almost a tenor, was resounding and quite as rapid as his look. Strapped, buckled, and mounted, he looked well in his uniform, a trite picture of an imperial figure. He was less impressive when not on horseback, although imposing enough.

The Tsar's sycophants were in the habit of describing him hushingly as the Empire's handsomest man, which was of course a rank stupidity. Whistler merely found him to be a fine-looking man, very much like General Scott. He felt, however, that the American general had never treated him—Whistler—with half the consideration that the Russian autocrat showed.

During the interview Whistler was at ease, and ascribed it to the Tsar's kindly manner. He thought there was something about Nicholas that at once enabled him, Whistler, to enter upon a conversation and tell this monarch all the engineer knew on the points of the august inquiries.

"With as much ease," wrote Whistler to America, "as I could have talked with any private gentleman. I verily believe I never said 'Your Majesty' once."

Thus would he be loyal to the democratic land of his affection and allegiance. He would not succumb to these silken manners. He had come to Russia in answer to the Tsar's business call, and business it should be, happen what might. Service, yes, but no servility.

As he talked to the Emperor, as he answered the questions, he described to Nicholas the whole of the projected route, its principal difficulties and how they might be overcome. The Tsar seemed much interested, for his questions were many and frequent.

On parting, Nicholas shook hands with the American. The handshake was a most courteous one, as were his words:

"I am sure, sir, you will do it right."

Whistler replied:

"You are very kind, sir, and if you think it well done when it is done, I shall be proud of your approbation."

But not once would he say "Your Majesty."

Chapter Five

IN RUSSIA the uniform was a universal stamp of servility, a sign that no one had a will of his own. Practically everyone—from generals to janitors, and from professors to chimney sweeps—wore a uniform of some sort. Would not this American, too, don the Tsar's livery?

Back in Washington the sly Bodisco, and in London the insistent Brunov, had suggested Whistler's formal entrance into the Tsar's military ranks, but he had steadfastly declined. Now, in Russia, the pressure was renewed. But he felt that the Russian uniform was too uncomfortable, morally no less than physically. With the same stubbornness he continued his refusal.

As he widened the acquaintance of his co-workers and subordinates in the field he noticed that all these Russian engineers were army men. Their ranks sounded quaintly: *engineer-captain*, *engineer-lieutenant*, *engineer-general*. In America the army men who built the early railroads had been ordered to resign either their railroad jobs or their army commissions, and at length most of them, similarly to Whistler, had sadly divested themselves of their uniforms. But in Russia non-army people were not allowed to hold posts on the railroad; all had to be in the military service.

And what pains were taken by the Tsar to safeguard the prestige of these military engineers! In the course of Whistler's first winter in Russia there was a week of much perturbed headshaking in the department of railroads: the Tsar and Kleinmichel were shocked by a short story published in a Russian magazine, wherein the author, while describing a party given by a petty official, made good-natured fun of a guest, an ensign in the road-building division: do look at his enormous epaulettes, his high collar, his extravagant neckcloth! At once the author and his editor were punished, and even the censors, who had let the story through, were arrested overnight. For the Tsar and Kleinmichel took the passage as a direct, indecent attack upon His Majesty's officers and their uniform.

In Russia, in this land of contradictions, where everyone wore a uniform, where a uniform was a mark of servility, the uniform was also sacred.

Let them discharge him, let them send him back to the United States, but Whistler would not put his head into the noose of the Russian military collar.

Service to the Tsar, indeed, but not servility.

II

They needed him. Seeing his obstinacy, needing his skill, they ceased suggesting the uniform. His work was too good; nothing was to interfere with its smooth flow. There is a legend that only once did Nicholas vary Whistler's plans.

It was on the question of the exact path that the railroad should take between the new and old capitals. Many proposals there had been, says the legend, until the Tsar grasped a ruler, placed it between the two points on the map, and drew a straight line. This is your railroad, he ordered, *my* railroad between Peter's Window into Europe and the First-Called Capital.

Even if not true the legend is characteristic. A straight line, indeed. They wanted straight, unbending lines in that unhappy country. They loved and used the French language, those Russians of the Tsar did, but in their buildings, their military matters, their new roads they followed the stiff Prussian patterns. So many of their nobles and officials were Germans. So much German blood was there in the very Romanovs. Their officers and soldiers, in their tight and impractical uniforms, looked as if they had swallowed a yardstick or a ramrod apiece. A German yardstick—a Prussian ramrod, the Tsar's infallible model when even to his railroadmen he said: "You want a direction? Here is your direction!"

And in fact, if you now travel between Leningrad (*né* St. Petersburg) and Moscow, you will readily note that it is one of the straightest railroads in the world—whatever the origin and reason. A more plausible explanation, though, is that the country between the two capitals is very level, and thus a straight line is

sensible. Also, that in the olden days locomotives were not too nimble, and curves were avoided to escape catastrophes.

In the effort to eliminate curves the stern railroad orphaned three old towns: Novgorod, Valdai, and Torzhok. The three were on the *chaussée*, but not in the new brisk timetable of the hooting monster. There was much surprise when the Russians heard of the imperial decision. Why were the engineers avoiding such a well-known town as Novgorod? Why stretch the rails across the emptiness between the Volga and the Volkhov rivers? Would it not be better to lead the iron snorter across localities with denser population, by the side of the *chaussée* which would feed men and materials and thus lessen the high cost of construction?

But to go by Novgorod would lengthen the railroad by seventy versts. And the first task of any railroad was to provide the shortest route between given points. Whoever omitted the famed town of song and story, the town of Novgorod, whether Whistler or the Tsar himself, had the practical idea.

There may have been another consideration, less laudable, namely: in the old Russian tongue this town used to be called Novgorod Master the Great. It was a free riproaring city of old, a republic of the predatory bourgeoisie in the days of Hanseatic trade, a rich and arrogant city-state until in the fifteenth century Tsar Ivan III of Muscovy conquered and ruined it. In the 1840s it was a sleepy provincial town, its houses one-storied and awry, although the white of their jutties, pilasters, and window ornaments yet gleamed prettily against the yellow of their walls. Was Nicholas I thinking of the *veche*, that ancient democratic institution of Novgorod, the noisy town-meeting of free and equal citizens? Was he thinking of its dead republicanism, and so wished it left and buried in the background of history safely and for all times, when he refused it his iron steed?

In America, when a railroad missed towns, some of them moved lock, log, and chimney to the iron artery. No such daring for moribund Russia. Novgorod remained to drowse on its original site.

And so did Torzhok. And Valdai, too.

Torzhok was known to the elegant even of Paris for its handi-

craft of morocco leather, figured and embroidered with gold and silver thread; the much-demanded leather made into soft boots and slippers, pliable but sturdy belts, and durable wallets. Torzhok was also celebrated for its tasty meat-cakes or cutlets *à la Pozharsky*, which, according to a legend, owed their succulence to a recipe left behind by an unknown prisoner from the Napoleonic horde.

Valdai was handsomely framed in the green of the hills and the white of the lakes halfway between the two Russian capitals; somewhat too ambitiously it was nicknamed the little Switzerland of Russia. The town was famous for the big church bells molded and tested there and sold all over the Holy Tsardom, also for the little sleigh and carriage bells, sweet-chiming things cast by the Valdaians. To this day, the song goes:

. . . and the little bell,
The gift of Valdai . . .

Valdai's wild roses were prized far beyond its streets and ravines. The natives were also proud of the local May-lily, and a plant known as sea-onion, and a rare medicinal herb called Adam's Shoe.

But two towns there were to be on the railroad in addition to the two capitals. These were Tver, well-built and neat-appearing, with its abundance of ikons and priests and monks; and Vyshni-Volochek, or the Upper Portage, marking the beginning of the canal which connected the Caspian Sea, by way of the Volga, with the Baltic by way of Lake Ladoga and the broad Neva.

III

Whistler's construction line was divided into two so-called "directions," Northern and Southern, both of about equal lengths. Each direction was subdivided into districts, which in turn were subdivided into "distances," ten versts apiece. An engineer bossed each "distance." In May, 1843, practically the entire graduating class of the Tsar's engineering school was sent to work on the

railroad. The Northern direction received ten engineer-lieutenants, the Southern fourteen.

That summer a young man in his twenty-second year was among the graduates of the engineering school. He had an egg-shaped head with wide cheekbones and a scanty fringe of hair around the face. His eyes were intense. He was a daydreamer of literary schemes, a soul-scratcher on a grand scale, an impoverished nobleman filled with vague notions of social reform and mystic insights into fellow humans. In the engineering school he had wasted five long years, a brutalized puppet like the rest of the student herd. He hated exact sciences. Mathematics, he once wrote to his father, was such a useless subject and trifling soap-bubble that its study was wholly superfluous. During his final examinations he drew a plan for a fortress but forgot to provide gates. The Tsar wrote on the paper: "What fool did this?"

The fool's name was Feodor Dostoyevsky.

His school record had been on the whole rather good, so that the final blunder merely cost him a better job. He was not sent to build the railroad, nor of course to participate in the improvement of the Cronstadt forts then in process. His appointment was a very modest one: to be a draftsman in the Petersburg Engineering Corps.

Freedom from schooling Dostoyevsky celebrated with a dinner in a fashionable restaurant—with good food and wine and thumping piano music in a private dining room.

But he could not forget the jeering question of the Tsar. He hated the service. A fool, eh? Well, he, unlike his mates, was not going to build the railroad, nor improve the forts, but with his sharp insight and sharper pen he would show them all!

IV

The Northern direction extended from St. Petersburg to the Koloments creek near the village of Bologoye. Colonel Paul Melnikov was its head.

The Southern ran from Bologoye to Moscow. Colonel Nicholas Kraft was its chief.

Whistler had liked the two Colonels ever since he had met them in Springfield, when they had first told Russia that he was the world's best engineer. Of the two, Melnikov, although at one time junior in rank, was more of a specialist in the new realm of railroads. Not only an army engineer, but also a professor of mechanics, he taught in the engineering school, and it was he who wrote the earliest Russian textbook on railroad building. Yet Kraft was not far behind: his thorough articles appeared in the *Journal of the Ministry of Communications*.

Clever men were these two, but of what opposing habits! So opposite that having gone to America as friends they returned enemies. Kraft envied Melnikov's better English, quicker promotion, and larger salary. Melnikov felt that Kraft's eccentricities were fast sliding into utter craziness. Presently they hated each other with all the intensity of their Slav souls, and would not meet to discuss the problems of the railroad they were building together; even the thunderous Kleinmichel dared not bring them face to face. They were, their compatriots jested, like the imperial eagle of Russia: the bird was one whole, yet its two heads gazed stubbornly opposite ways. Their respective staffs aped the enmity, which led to much redtape and little co-operation.

Whistler watched these two men with an increasing amazement, with a frequent shrug of his weary shoulders.

V

Melnikov lived in the village of Chudovo, in a spacious hut freshly built on a hill overlooking a rustic jetty.

His mode of living was simple, but with a dash-and-go of bachelorlike haphazardness. He could have been called a bohemian were it not for his ample salary, his bank savings, and his stinginess. In the center of his room was a long deal-table which he used for blueprints. His army coat and his field-surtout hung on the wall, beside a map of Russia's roads.

He was unmarried, yet no hermit. A worldly man, a peppery official, he loved society and a glass of welcome, but would not spend his rubles for either carriages or food. His dinner was a

peasant's sour soup of beef and cabbage; it was called "soup with roaches" because the cabbage was black and floated in small pieces as if animated. For dessert he had a tart from a confectioner's, which Melnikov would keep for as long as two months, eating a little at a time.

His side whiskers were fashioned after those of his Tsar. He talked much, in a rapid flat voice. Young engineers were his favorites, and he gave them instructions in total disregard of the proper channel of their district chiefs, who naturally grumbled. Most engineers were reluctant to accompany him on tours of inspection, for on such occasions they had to share his uncomfortable springless vehicles and eat the same rough and scanty food as he did. He tried to win the young ones by closing his eyes to graft. Contractors were growing rich, but he did not mind so long as they bribed his engineers. Once, an honest officer reported an outstandingly bad case of public-money theft, and Melnikov sternly replied: "I've known that there are thieves among my officers, but so far I've believed that there are no informers among them. You, sir, are the first informer!"

After that, there were no more reports of graft. Engineers waxed wealthy, undisturbed. A young lieutenant acquired a villa in Finland, certainly not from his modest salary. Two others built comfortable houses in St. Petersburg. Because of this, work in the Northern direction progressed more slowly than in the Southern, and in mad flares Kleinmichel dragged Melnikov over the coals of the coffeehouse reading-matter.

In firm belief that Kleinmichel was a rude ignoramus, the Colonel persisted in his own ways.

VI

Kraft lived in a fine but ill-kept house at Tver, on the so-called Millionaires' Street which lacked millionaires.

Odd human that he was, a ferocious looking man with a soul like a violet, Kraft was timid and silent, and kept away from the world. When he did speak he emphasized his unhurried words. Sometimes he became much interested in a topic, and would then

speak with heat. He trusted his district chiefs, although in general he was in deep doubt about life and people.

Kraft liked to pose before a mirror in his study. Since his rooms were on the ground floor, curious folk would look into his windows. Kraft solved the problem by pasting the window panes with light-green wallpaper. He wrote much, and it was puzzling how he could do so in the semi-dark without ruining his eyes. But posing before a mirror was more important to him than preserving his eyes.

He posed as Napoleon. Of course he did this only when he was alone. Kraft's features were longish, and he wore spectacles; nevertheless, he imagined that facially he resembled the great Corsican. At times he was worried over the fancied resemblance and his destiny, but more often he was elated.

Here and there in his dusty, chaotic rooms loomed up small marble pillars topped with gilded statuettes of Bonaparte, all of varying sizes. In the perpetual twilight of the study hung a gigantic portrait of his idol. Over the armchairs and sofas there lay scattered items of clothing, footwear, headgear, and military gewgaws, all patterned after those worn by the late Emperor of France: distinguished uniforms and vests, characteristic boots, richly tasseled epaulettes, soft scarves, white gloves of elkskin, sword knots of brass foil or tinsel. Kraft was in constant correspondence with a purveyor in Paris who either made or bought these articles for the Russian.

Kraft avoided the company of people other than his own engineers and officials, yet all the high officers of the Tver province, all the noblemen of the region, were eager to make his acquaintance. The landed nobility were in a ferment, complaining that the railroad would come either too far or too near their estates. In domestic *tarantasy* and *brichki*, in imported berlins and dormeuses, they rode to see Kraft, to invite him to their homes and hunts. Many brought their wives and daughters along, to make smiling conversation. He received the men dryly, and he was terror-stricken at the stiff swish of the crinolines and at the sight of ruby lips. He would not offer chairs to his visitors. Discouraged, they at last left him alone.

Kraft's chief aide was Leodor Zagoskin, brother of a well-known writer of historical novels, and himself more of a poet and musician than engineer. He was pious, and his talk was mostly of the devil. Everywhere this engineer saw heresy and unholy forces. He used mathematics to prove that there was indeed a Satan. Satan had a certain physical dimension, he said. If you saw tumors covering a person's body, this was a sure sign he was possessed. The tumors, said the engineer, were precisely the spots inhabited by Satan. The demon would like to get out of such a person; he strained and strained but could not come out—hence these tumors.

If a subordinate agreed with the devil-believing railroad builder he was Zagoskin's bosom pal. But woe to him who betrayed skepticism! Zagoskin hastened to complain to Kraft of the skeptic's inefficiency in engineering. Nothing came of the complaints because Kraft always demanded proof of such charges.

Hurt, the aide would repair to the monks of Tver among whom his acquaintance was remarkably wide. They listened with sympathy, and added their own tales of the devil's doings.

VII

Other junior gentlemen among the engineers believed neither in the railroad nor Napoleon nor the devil. Some in secret read philosophy and were interested in Western politics. Many appreciated pleasure, and were gradually settling to it. There were among such youths a few graceful debauchees with faces of corrupt prettiness.

If a visit by Kleinmichel passed safely, these young officers would fetch a case of Clicquot or some other champagne. In the village of Yedrovo near Valdai they had early discovered cooks who roasted wood hens and hazel hens to perfection. To Yedrovo the gentle-born would race in their carriages, the precious champagne secure in straw at their feet. Then, sated and drunk, they would proceed to the domains of Longinov, a landlord famous for his hospitality.

His manor was a two-storied house of stone amid a park of handsome paths, of rare yellow flowers. In the rich rooms of velvet-and-

gold Gobelins, the officers would play cards well into the night, or sing the latest romances of the capital's vogue, or applaud the amateurs of *tableaux vivants*.

For the night, each officer had a separate room with the rare luxury of a washstand, soap, a brand-new toothbrush and fresh tooth paste. A serf brought black coffee with lemon. A Holland sheet caressed the guest's tired limbs, a quilt of silken stuff covered his body.

Praise be to Longinov, said the engineer as he fell asleep. Praise be to the railroad, said the genial host. The railroad that had saved him from boredom!

VIII

Whistler observed these Russian colleagues with interest bordering on bewilderment.

And, indeed, what made the younger ones so feverishly poetic about surveying or Western philosophy and politics? Or, to the contrary, so brazenly corrupt and pleasure-loving?

What made their chiefs so quarrelsome, shy, eccentric, mystic, superstitious?

Above all, what made them engineers when they should have been poets, actors, sybarites, revolutionaries, anchorites, priests?

Russia was a strange land, beyond a doubt.

Chapter Six

SEEING the long months taken by the surveying, the foes of the railroad started an onslaught of evil whispered rumors:

The two surveying parties got lost in the dense woods and marshes, and now cannot find each other.

The lines of the two directions will not meet—they were drawn wrongly.

In the province of Novgorod bottomless marshes were encountered.

The railroad was a failure ere the earthworks were started. Rails will never be laid.

There will be no railroad!

To Whistler the unconned newness of the Russian language for once proved a blessing: knowing little of the rumors, he calmly pursued the course of his labors. Early in 1843 the main surveying was completed. All was well.

Winter was retreating; the snow grayed and shrank. The days lengthened, and presently Whistler counted as many as twelve hours of continuous sunlight. Even before the last of the snow melted away, contingents of serfs slowly moved from western provinces to dig the line of the railroad. They walked toward Moscow and St. Petersburg along the ill-starred route once taken by Napoleon. The road was no smoother in 1843 than it had been in 1812.

Where snow receded, mud spread bleakly, and spring floods made passage difficult. Mounted bailiffs escorted the crowds. Each horseman's hand clutched a knout, now urging the pony, now hitting at a human laggard. If a man dropped in a faint, reviving vinegar would be pressed to his nostrils.

In June earthworks were begun from St. Petersburg to Chudovo, and from Vyshni-Volochek to Tver. Lucky were those serfs who chanced upon stretches of sand. But others had to work belt-deep in slimy marshes, chopping submerged stumps, or driving in piles,

or spading ditches to drain the mire, or dumping earth or brushwood and so doing away with the bogs. Along paths of planks, hundreds of wheelbarrows were pushed. The embankment rose slowly, certainly.

In spots, men came upon grounds now dry that aeons back must have been marshes. Diggers shoveled up to the surface teeth and bones of long-extinct animals: here of a mammoth, there of a rhinoceros. In a forest near Lyubenka River several ancient water wells were discovered, lined with boards. An entire oak, acorns intact on the branches, was lifted from a deep pit. The farther south the diggers moved, the more traces of old oaken forests they found. The stumps were much bigger than the weakling woods of these latter-day marshes. Rumors were started a-flying, never to be substantiated, that old treasures were uncovered, dating back several centuries to the times of Lithuanian wars.

Marshes, marshes. And to their problem Kleinmichel had but one solution: "Drive in piles!"

But what was going to happen to the embankment and its rails when, after a few years in the slime, the piles would begin to rot?

Whistler argued, Melnikov seconded, and at last the Count canceled the order. The local peasants smiled approvingly. They, from age-old experience, knew that the best way to fight the morasses was to cover them up with brushwood. A roadbed would rest securely on such a foundation.

This American surely knew his business.

II

To Whistler's line a number of Polish captives were brought as laborers. They had been taken in the quelled rebellion of 1831; until the railroad was launched these human cattle had slaved on the building of Russian *chaussées*.

They were a small group, however. Most of the railroad laborers came as bonded peasants from the western provinces of Smolensk, Vitebsk, and Vilno. They were Belorussian and Lithuanian folk whose lot was the sorriest in all the pitiful Russian land. Some belonged to private landlords, others were state peasants. In the

latter case, a contractor's agent bribed the village officials with what was called "dark money" to give him the needed number of serf-workers. All summer long, by the thousand, in their string-laced bast-shoes, in their tattered kaftans, they came or were driven to the line of works.

These serfs were tall but stoop-shouldered. Their hair was flaxen or of straw color. Their skill as diggers was far famed. Armed with spades, they went all over Russia's plains and hills to earn *obrok*—quit-rent—and perhaps bring a few rubles for their own and their families' subsistence.

Inhuman labor was demanded of them by the contractors and overseers. On this railroad they worked fourteen hours a day. Often they were deprived of their Sunday rest. This happened late in August and well into the autumn's rains and frosts, for by then time was at a premium—much had to be dug and built before the weather became too inclement.

Their food was bad: bread so hard that it had to be broken with axes; unwashed, rotted potatoes of small size; a mite of other vegetables; still less salt, but enough of salt-meat, which however was maggoty. Once, when they were given fresh beef, an official gravely reported that they were unaccustomed to such delicacy and might fall ill if served good meat too frequently.

Kleinmichel's order was to establish work-camps on dry land surrounded by unpassable marshes, with as few roads leading out as possible, so that the roads might be easily guarded and escapes prevented.

Men lived in sod-huts, tents, jerrybuilt wooden barracks, and in shacks put together of birchbark and tree branches. They slept on the ground. Near by were their primitive kitchens, of earthen walls. The rarer, more solid log houses were used as hospitals but lacked the necessary equipment and cleanliness. Baron Korff, the most prominent contractor of the Northern direction, advised not to equip the hospital huts beforehand: "Our peasants are averse to lazarettos. We should not arouse their fears." An aide of Kleinmichel's agreed brightly: "Hospitals and extensive medical preparations incite turmoil of minds and fear amongst our plain folk."

Scurvy and rash developed early. Diarrhea, too, was not tardy in appearing. Typhoid proved to be chief among the fevers which finished many of these lives. More deaths came to the crews working in the open fields than in the forests and marshes, for, explained the Russians, there were perpetual drafts in the fields but few in the woods.

Vodka was deemed the best medicine. Makeshift taverns were kept by shrewd publicans to whom the franchise had been farmed out by Count Kankrin. Long before the railroad works began, the Minister of Finance had pestered Kleinmichel's office into making arrangements for these dramshops. After all, the imperial treasury derived half its income from the sale of vodka—of that Green Serpent, as the Slavs called the drink. And so now, along Whistler's line, a small fir tree nailed to a tent or hut signaled the presence of a publican. The only restriction was that the taverns could crowd no closer to the line of work than one verst. The adjacent villages had been virgin to vodka before the railroaders came here, but presently the local mouzhiks drank no less bitterly than the imported serfs. A mighty saying of ancient times rang out above the pits: "The joy of Russia is in drink!"

Because the serfs were constantly shortchanged, because even their ignorance was no safeguard against protest and rebellion, the wisest thing for the contractors was to be in cahoots with the publicans—to drown the men's murmur before it became a roar and a rage. Holidays in particular were a dangerous time: idle men might think and talk, and even act. Therefore, each Saturday night a barrel of vodka, purchased by the contractor from the nearest publican, was rolled toward the camp. The serfs got drunk. They sang, and their songs were seldom full-throated and always in a minor key. At long intervals they got mad enough to fight one another, or pick quarrels with local peasants. A few of the fights ended in murders.

If men ventured a complaint of their contractors' cheating, Kleinmichel's answer was birching. On one occasion as many as eighty railroad laborers were ordered to lie down in a row, baring

their lean buttocks. Sometimes, to sharpen the punishment, the split birchcanes were first soaked in pickle-brine.

Men rebelled by kneeling in prayer. They were brought back to their feet and their spades by the knout.

Men tried to run away. They were caught and dragged back.

They were flogged over their backs, over the soft parts of the anatomy, over the sexual organs too. Guts fell out in a bloody mess. Heads were battered while the Tsar's officials looked on, coldly counting the decreed number of blows.

From time to time the two colonels, Kraft and Melnikov, attended. The Belorussian diggers greeted an officer slavishly: bending their figures, the serfs would approach, carefully press the hem of the man's uniform coat to their lips, and pronounce the formula of the western regions whence they had come: "I kiss, master Colonel!"

They would then release the hem and back out of the officer's presence, their figures bent for a long time after.

III

Not that the Russians were alone in using helot labor to build the iron marvel.

In the American South many railroads hired black slaves in slack seasons from plantation owners along the routes; one line, between Vicksburg and Meridian, owned three hundred Negroes. And were the Irish railroad laborers of New England, the so-called free men, any better off? And not only Irish but native Americans too. It was in these very 1840s that the sage of Walden described the filthy huts and wretched lives of men building North American railroads. Thoreau asked:

"Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad?"

And answered:

"Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that,

if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon."

It is singular, but precisely the same indignant simile was used by Russian liberals when they talked of the railroad built between St. Petersburg and Moscow. Not iron sleepers, they said, but Russian peasant bones were the foundation of the railroad.

IV

Whistler filed a report in favor of a broader gauge for the railroad—a report that for many years afterward was considered a masterpiece of reasoning on matters pertaining to railroads. In spite of the opposition of certain members of the commission, thanks to Kleinmichel's support rather than the merits of the report, Whistler carried the day.

Nevertheless, there were times when Kleinmichel's addled mind or abysmal ignorance put a load on the American's shoulders. Thus Whistler informed the Count that in his opinion the future road should have one hundred and eighty locomotives and as many tenders, also eighteen hundred passenger cars and five thousand four hundred freight cars. Kleinmichel passed each item and figure, but halted his heavy pencil at the word *tender*.

He knew that the word had a nautical meaning—a tender was a cutter. He did not know that there was also such a thing as a locomotive engine tender. The satrap summoned a vice-director of his ministry:

"What kind of tender does this American want us to build?"

The inferior did not know. Terrified, he replied at random:

"It's a small steam machine, Your Excellency."

"You're lying!" the Count cried, and hit the man's face with the pencil. "A tender is a seaboat! The scoundrelly American plans it in case his locomotive falls into the water! I won't permit such disorders—we don't need tenders!"

Whistler was told of the Count's order. He smiled in tolerance and explained concisely. Tenders were restored in the Count's grace.

V

And who should build the rolling stock for the road?

While in America, the two Colonels had heard of the modest but able firm of Andrew Eastwick and Joseph Harrison. The Russians had tested the locomotives of the American pair, and had sent to the Tsar their high recommendation. Whistler agreed with the Colonels but thought that one small firm was not enough to handle the tremendous contract. As addition he suggested the name of Ross Winans, the Baltimore mechanic, whose improved model of an engine he praised with all his discerning might. Back in Springfield the Major had tested the Winans machines against the locomotives made by a certain William Norris, and he had pronounced the former superior, Norris' loud protests and dirty hints notwithstanding. He had signed with Winans a contract for the Western Railroad, and the majority of the directors had sided with him, but a minority seemed to be displeased and took Norris' word. Ever since that stormy dispute of 1840-41 William Norris, a pushing individual, had been going around the States and Europe lauding his own locomotives and condemning the Baltimore product. But the Russians favorably remembered the name of Winans; was he not the author of the friction wheels on the sailing-car of 1830 tried out for the Tsar's envoy on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad? The model of the unique car still reposed in the Winter Palace. And so it was thanks to that remembrance, as well as to Whistler's insistence, that not only Harrison but Winans too received the Tsar's invitation to come to Russia.

Harrison arrived in the spring of 1843. Ross Winans, but four years Whistler's senior, felt too old for adventuring. He remained in his Baltimore shop, and sent his young son Thomas to Russia.

The Russians, however, moved slowly. Their personnels were too numerous, their confabs endless. By the end of the summer nothing as yet was ruled by the government on the actual building of engines and cars, although Whistler's plans and specifications were approved in principle. The Major tried his best. He

said that he endeavored to put together in these engines all the good things and get rid of all the bad ones that experience had developed up to his time. Harrison and Tom Winans worked with him through the summer, but so far not a single contract was let their way. Whistler felt that the Russian government would make a serious error if these people were not kept. They should have the contract.

He was afraid that the Russian government would allow itself to be led astray by the boasts of such locomotive makers as, say, Norris. During the Springfield controversy of 1840-41 the Major wrote that irresponsible statements of superior and peculiar pulling-power of locomotives were injurious to the railroads even more than to the builders themselves. Expecting yet greater improvements to come within a year—nay, within a few months—railroad companies started with outfits that were too small, and then, for replenishment, went from maker to maker, collecting a variety of patterns, destroying uniformity, depriving themselves of an opportunity to shift parts from one engine to another in case of necessity, and so doing away with true economy. "Uniformity," Major Whistler wrote, "is of such importance that all deviations should be avoided until the advantages of a change are of such an obvious nature as to render a total change desirable." He hoped that the Tsar would not repeat the error of many an American railroad company director. The Tsar's astounding love of uniformity in all things large and small should certainly be welcome in the question of the rolling stock for the railroad.

But the pie was too tempting. Selfish hands reached out from many a quarter. Contractors and promoters, men of various nationalities, came to the Tsar's capital to be persistent doorstep-sitters and doorbell-ringers. And of course it was mostly Whistler's door.

As in London when he had been compelled to shoo off the Duff Greens and the Elliott Cressons, so in St. Petersburg the Major defended himself by being frigid. All and sundry could not be satisfied. He had to be harsh: there were so many men

afoat with self-made halos, with excellent conceits of themselves whose assurances were light coin!

And what bad penny should turn up in St. Petersburg this summer of 1843 if not William Norris himself. Whistler snubbed him when Norris came to see and beg the Major. They had a brief talk about engines, brief because the Major said he was truly surprised at the man's scant knowledge of the subject. A creature of folly and bluster, this man Norris was, despite his vocation of engine-building. Whistler had seen his engines on a British line, and also remembered a few of them on a road in New England, but held them flimsy things for heavy freight.

Nothing abashed, Norris sent Whistler a note offering a percentage should the Major help him to a contract with the Tsar. Whistler returned the note without remark.

Norris wrote again, this time to apologize. So much like a stupid cur wagging his tail after having fouled under the host's sofa! Whistler returned the second note, again with no comment. Norris began to pack.

Recrossing the frontier, Norris spread the news that he had obtained orders from Austria and Denmark, from Prussia and France. Paltry devices! Whistler wrote home to America that the man was a liar. It was true that Norris had brought a model to King Louis Philippe of France and so had secured an order for one engine, but this was all the business he had won on the continent.

In the fall Norris returned to Russia. With his usual flourish he hovered around hoping for a deal, although not daring to come near Whistler.

Everybody tried to get things from Whistler, some while his back was turned. Thus a man named Wyatt claimed to have invented a double chimney used on locomotives, and even took out a patent. But the Major indignantly recalled his own double chimney, made some ten years before in the shape of a Doric column, and used on a Stephenson engine at Lowell. He wrote to son George to find a drawing of the locomotive in the papers he had left either in Lowell or Stonington. There was a date on the drawing, and that would show Wyatt what was what. Whis-

tlar boasted few inventions of his own, and could not afford to lose credit for any of them.

VI

At the annual fair of Nizhni-Novgorod on the Volga, where two hundred thousand merchants of the Eastern lands came together to bargain in twenty different languages, Colonel Todd was pleased to see the cotton of the Mississippi and the rice of South Carolina side by side with the cotton and rice of Bokhara. Cotton and rice were the main articles of American export to Russia, but machinery was of late coming in many more crates than ever before. With the progress of Whistler's work, machinery was catching up with cotton, for various contraptions of American make were needed on the line of the railroad. If and when the rolling-stock contract was signed, the figures of Yankee machine purchases for Russia would rise yet higher.

On reaching American journals the news of Whistler's favor in the distant Tsardom woke fond hopes in scores of his compatriots. America was in a speculative, building, expansive mood; why not include the supervision of Russia's coming of industrial age in the Yankees' manifest destiny?

Inventors and projectors, mechanics and schemers wrote to Tsar Nicholas offering their services. In the summer of 1843 practically every steamer brought to Cronstadt an energetic American or two. In most cases they were either New Englanders or West-erners, of a commercial or inventive bend.

The Russian police were puzzled, particularly when one Yankee arrived at the port with a collection of agricultural machinery: newly invented ploughs, forbidding-looking harrows, complicated scythes, wondrous cradles, astonishing pitchforks, and other improved notions strange to the Slav eye. He had no passport, his mannerisms seemed suspect, and so the police decided that his stock was an assortment of infernal machines designed to blow up the Tsar and his court.

The traveler and his weapons were unloaded under the close watch of the police. On the dunes of Cronstadt he had to demon-

strate his wheat cutters and hayrakes, he had to prove the advantages of a side-hill plough, before the fears of the police were set at rest and the American with his wares was allowed to proceed up the Neva.

Sometimes it was an American's turn to be awed by the Tsar's police. A Yankee, arriving on business in 1843, was told by the gendarmes that he had been to Russia once before, in 1820, on a trip of pleasure, and the details of that visit of twenty-three years earlier were recited to the traveler's great surprise. One felt in Russia as if in a glass case.

All summer long the stream of American men and goods continued. Steamers and merchantmen brought stacks of parcels and packing cases addressed to Colonel Todd from persons he had never known back home. *This Side Up with Care*, read the inscriptions, and in the accompanying letters the American Minister was instructed to deliver the parcels and cases to His Majesty along with a most urgent personal endorsement of their merits.

Models and samples of every new Yankee device, from patented firearms to gadgets for making pins, were in those boxes. There were models of bridges and floating docks, there were briefs and blueprints for steamboats of newer systems as well as for sailing vessels that would leave even the fastest steamboats miles behind. Each mail carried envelopes bulky with daguerreotypes of the seeking gentlemen and their works and models.

There were, especially from Western states, requests for high posts in the Tsar's army and navy. One individual offered clocks of superior quality in unlimited quantities. Another addressed to each member of the imperial family a barrel of choice Newtown pippins. Yet another sent in samples of "mineral teeth" of his own invention. Someone dispatched to Nicholas a treatise on the cure of diseases of the spine, thus hoping to become the Tsar's American surgeon. From a devotee of the temperance society came a picture of the human stomach ravaged by the use of brandy.

At last the Emperor bristled with an ukase: no presents from unknown persons would be tolerated by the imperial family; the flow of such gifts must be stopped. Colonel Todd and his secretary, John Maxwell, breathed freely. With a comical magnanimity

they distributed among their English-speaking friends in St. Petersburg the Newtown apples meant for the Tsar.

VII

Despite this stream of Americans and their contributions, the Russia of the interior was yet unaware of the marvelous people over the seas. On trips to Moscow, Whistler and Todd and Maxwell were regarded with much curiosity. Several old noblemen asked questions about the tiger and the crocodile and many another rare beast dwelling just outside New York or Philadelphia, nay, at the very doorways of these interesting Americans.

Hold on, were they Americans? These travelers spoke English. They must be British then! Also their skins were of a color dubious for Americans. There was a mistake somewhere, said an ancient but lively prince, as he begged the visitors to accompany him to the theater.

Puzzled, they came along. In the parterre, amid the throng of beautiful ladies, wasp-waisted officers, and stout dignitaries, the prince craned his neck forward until the members of the orchestra began to fill their places below the stage.

"There!" he pointed. "There is a real American!"

In company with his fellow musicians—in this motley group of Frenchmen, Italians, Germans and other adventurous foreigners—a well-dressed Negro was tuning his fiddle. He was black as a moonless night, his hair looked as if it had been frosted, and Maxwell agreed with Todd that the man's style of bowing was Virginia all over.

"Undoubtedly an American," Maxwell turned to the prince, "although not what we would consider *le vrai bouquet*."

Chapter Seven

INCREASINGLY Whistler was paying heed to men and matters other than those having to do with the railroad. St. Petersburg was boldly claiming his eye and ear. He could not always excuse himself with his lack of knowledge of Russian or French, for, much to his surprise, he discovered an English-speaking world within the Russian shell. All around his lodgings dwelt English people, mostly merchants and their families, known as the Factory; also people who dealt with the Factory and so knew their crisp, clipped English language. Within a walking distance, in Galernaya, was an English bookstore. The same street was alive with boardinghouses for British travelers, and one of these establishments let rooms especially to sea captains and their wives, folk of Scottish accent and Bible language. The boarding school of a certain Mr. Hirst had a top-rank standing in the capital; sons of English and German traders went there, also some Russian boys, and so British was the atmosphere that even the Germans and the Slavs soon grew Anglicized. The English church stood not far off—on the English Quay.

The church was a splendid building well endowed. This was the unruffled, unhurried heart of the Factory of some sixteen hundred Britishers residing in the Tsar's capital. Some of the Factory members, Whistler was interested to learn, were born in Russia of trading and seafaring stock that had first settled here in the middle of the eighteenth century, and despite all those years the descendants preserved their tongue and faith. It was Anna's faith—she would surely rejoice at such steadfast loyalty that resulted in so little intermarriage of the Factory people with the Russians, in practically no kneeling to the Greek faith. Yes, Whistler nodded, a fine church—Anna would be pleased. No expense had been spared by the Factory for its church: there was a magnificent new organ costing one thousand pounds and furnished with the luxury of a hired organist. Whistler made the acquaintance of the Reverend Mr. Edward Law, holder of this

comfortable living for the last twenty-three years. The parsonage fluttered with innumerable ladies and frequent soirées, and the Major enjoyed the music and only wondered how Anna might take the jollity of this pastor and his wife and daughters.

He met other English of St. Petersburg, and was amazed by the riches and power of some of them. There were the Bairds, owners of a huge iron foundry and many other industrial undertakings. There were the Merrielees men, those busy Scotch establishing and expanding the first department store in Russia. There were exporters and admirals, bankers and generals, whose moneys and medals already had tradition behind them. But there were also new Englishmen of worth, children of the industrial revolution—mechanics rapidly emerging as capitalists, and chandlers transforming themselves into shipping magnates. Whistler was invited to their homes, to those grand dinners for twenty, with courses served by the many flunkies in Russian style. He listened to his new friends' stories, which were franker than was customary with the British he had known before, and answered their inquiries about his past and prospects, but shyly, if indeed not dryly.

Whistler discovered his greatest boon in a neighbor, William Ropes of Boston, and his English wife. Both were young and of steady cheer; William's was the only American business house in Russia, and he expected big things of this country and of himself. Ellen Ropes was a good cook and superior musician, and Whistler willingly responded to their invitations, bringing his appetite to their board and his flute to her piano. Their two little girls reminded him of his own brood, and he smiled wistfully.

Of Colonel Todd and Secretary Maxwell he saw considerably less, for social lions kept hours different from his. While Whistler went to English-speaking homes and returned early, the Colonel and his secretary frequented the natives' palaces and mansions and came back long past midnight. Whistler was amused, although at times rather shocked, by whatever little he saw or knew of Colonel Todd. This jolly Kentuckian, this corncracker from the Indian country, was in the early fifties but well pre-

served. His eye for beauty was famous. Letitia Shelby Todd in her younger years had been a renowned belle of the South, but he omitted to bring her to the land of his assignment, perhaps because she was no longer young. Life in St. Petersburg was gay, the Russian ladies were fair with morals frail. Maxwell told strange things of Russia's women: even those of the best families behaved till marriage-time only; shortly after attaining the status of matron, well-nigh every woman took a lover. Colonel Todd had a good time, serving himself—if not his country—extremely well. Todd had known how to fight Indians and English, how to play Whig politics and help elect General Harrison to the White House, how to pluck this Russian post in reward even after Harrison had died and Tyler had succeeded. And now Russia was a splendid country, her ladies part of the iridescence ordered especially for Todd.

II

Gradually Whistler was learning the St. Petersburg of the Russians. He would often walk along the streets and marvel.

The Broadway of the capital—Nevsky Prospect—began in Admiralty Square, not far from Whistler's house, and ran for three miles until the red cloisters and green-blue starry domes of the monastery of Alexander Nevsky were reached. Wide walks of flagstones extended on each side of the smooth carriage road made of a floor of plank, upon which blocks of wood were fitted into one another with the greatest of skill and care. Palaces, churches, theaters, and bronze monuments lined both sides, and there also were many large and stately houses where ground floors were fashionable stores while the upper floors contained apartments of noblemen and foreign merchants.

At intersections, and sometimes on a vacant lot in the middle of a block, stood *budki*, or booths housing gray-and-red-capped policemen. The *budochnik*, or boothman, had neither pistol nor rifle; instead, he held an enormous halberd, which, however, was a hindrance in apprehending criminals or subduing drunks. The booth was a small room, yet it held not only the boothman but

also his family; an assistant-sentry lived in the same room of dank odors, and it served in addition as a workshop where the boothman and his dependents ground snuff-tobacco for sale. As neither this sale nor their salary was sufficient to maintain the police, the boothmen were ever on the lookout for easy graft from the passing citizenry.

Sidewalks were a-swarm with officers and soldiers in an astounding variety of regimental uniforms; with petty officials and somber students, also in martial attire; with Cossacks and Circassians in their woolly *burki* and lambskin hats; with visiting tribesmen of many other corners of the Empire, each in his own costume of fur or silk. Russian merchants in caps and long blue surtouts, serfs in sheepskin, servants in livery, apprentices with aprons over their rags and with heavy delivery parcels on their heads, walked and shuffled and ran along.

Upon the carriage road of Nevsky Prospect the traffic was fast and sundry. A coach-and-four—a bearded coachman on the box, a little postilion on the near leader, and one or two brightly dressed footmen behind—raced past a humble drozhky with a passenger beside the driver or straddling the main narrow board of the vehicle. Barouches with haughty ladies lumbered by. Court coaches of grand dukes, with grooms in blue and silver, claimed the right of way. Mounted couriers flashed like winged apparitions.

But notice! An unusual agitation seizes the crowd; the rhythm is broken. Heads are bared, men stop and wheel to the rightabout, carriages halt—there is a hush of expectancy and fear: it is the Emperor himself riding or walking by, a tall stern figure in a plumed chapeau, a cloak and strapless pantaloons of dark cloth; the Tsar, proud as a clipper cutting through the receding waves of the human sea belonging to him; the chief officer of the Empire, returning the surge of panic-stricken greetings with a bare military salute. He is out for his health as well as to see that no one smokes on the streets or otherwise disobeys his rules.

He passes, and the traffic resumes its freedom and speed. Coachmen again call at the top of their voices, "*Padi, padi!* Fall back!"

But soon enough the stream is again disrupted as troops march

through or a funeral procession fills the avenue. If a prince or some other high-ranking officer is being taken to his grave, Nevsky Prospect becomes the scene of a pageant. The Metropolitan opens the cortège, his miter jeweled and dazzling. Behind, priests walk bareheaded, their long manes and beards flowing in the wind. On cushions of crimson velvet the many medals of the deceased are carried by the military, badges of mourning conspicuous on their uniforms. Undertakers' men fetch flambeaux. The horses drawing the catafalque are covered with black, but scarlet and gold are over the coffin, and above it the high canopy is of gilded ornament. Once more the Tsar appears. He is in full uniform, but no matter how cold the weather he wears no overcloak. As he sees the procession pass him he crosses himself repeatedly, but later, for about fifteen minutes, he will stand motionless. His mount is just as still. The brilliant cavalcade of his henchmen rearranges itself into a semicircle around him, and amid the grand dukes there is the phlegmatic-looking heir, while above the generals there towers the fierce Kleinmichel.

They are gone, and the artery once again finds its ordinary pulse. Once again coachers cry and wheels scrape and ring.

In the side streets, to the warning calls of coachers were added the selling rhymes of pedlars and hawkers, the shouts of jugglers and Punch-and-Judy men, the chants of acrobats and men with trained bears, the song and music of minstrels and hurdy-gurdy grinders, the moans and groans and pleas of those Russians who were being beaten.

A surprising number and variety of Russians were being constantly beaten on the streets in full view of everyone. Passing soldiers, who did not salute quickly or properly or whose buttons did not shine brightly enough, were stopped and their mouths bloodied by officers. Poor peasant-drivers of public drozhkys or sleighs were rough-handled by their passengers. Drunken men were horribly belabored by boothmen and janitors. Cheap sluts shrieked and wept for mercy as their clients vented dissatisfaction. Thieves, caught redhanded or merely suspected, were mangled by shopkeepers with able volunteer aid from passers-by.



RUSSIAN FOLK AMUSEMENTS: DANCE CIRCLE

From a folk-broadside of the period. Russian peasant maidens dancing, on the right a peasant and his wife passing, on the left a nobleman and his wife, with their lackey behind; the lackey is in uniform and a three-cornered hat.

Husbands were not shy at teaching their wives with fists and slaps; parents punished their children just as publicly; artisans and tradesmen gave resounding blows to their boy-apprentices.

Nor were the streets blessed with quiet after nightfall: watchmen exchanged long and melancholy signals of voice and rattle; victims of robbers yelled for help; and at dawn herdsmen played their horns calling for housewives' cows, while dog-catchers chased and killed loud-yelping curs, and carriages were noisy on the pavements taking nobles home from all-night balls.

Periodically—in cold or heat, in snow or dust—there was a carnival, a fete, a feast. In March came the Butter Week, in April the Easter festivities, on May the First a great folk-holiday, while various *guliania* or fun-walks thronged the summer months.

The Butter Week was by far the maddest. It preceded the forty cheerless days of Lent, and the Russians prepared for Lent's bleakness by overeating and overfunning during the Week. They gorged pancakes of butter and jam, of caviar and cheese, and many other kinds of stuffing. They went on fast sledge rides, jingle-bells clanging incessantly. One mummery after another marked the lurid Week. Whistler the engineer was fascinated by the beehive doings in Admiralty Square where carpenters and other artisans were erecting for the lower classes their temporary theaters, swings, and ice hills. As for the upper classes, they merely intensified the usual pastimes: the opera became a morning and afternoon revel all through the Week, so that every evening could be devoted to balls. Tales of loose frivolity were current about those balls, frivolity under a thin disguise of the strictest decorum and minutest etiquette.

III

But the Tsar—was he not looking after his subjects' morals? Was he not boasting of his Russians' virtue no less than of his own?

It was true that Tsar Nicholas liked to show off his spartan habits. Yes, he disdained warm clothing on cold days. He pre-

tended to favor water as his drink; only occasionally would he sip a modest glass of wine. More than an abstainer from tobacco, he resented it when others smoked. In his daily walks about the capital—in the morning before breakfast, and late in the day after dinner—as he looked for infractions of law and order, he kept a hawk-sharp eye for wisps of weed-smoke. Smoke polluted the air, he said; since smoking bothered non-users of tobacco, it should be done in private, not in public.

Tsar Nicholas also enjoyed playing the role of a fond and faithful husband to his German wife, a manly example of virtue to all his subjects. He feted his Tsarina, and displayed concern for her health. At court, to show how moral he was, Nicholas frowningly spoke of his imperial grandmother Catherine: "That crowned whore!"

But Russia would not be fooled. The populace knew of the beautiful Barbara Nelidova, the Tsar's mistress number one. It was an open and ribald story how Kleinmichel's wife would add belly-padders to her figure every time Nelidova was pregnant; how she would discard the padders after Nelidova's delivery and announce the favorite's child as another little Kleinmichel. Nelidova was a maid of honor to the Emperor's wife who knew the woman's true function but dared not say any except sweet friendly words to her.

There were other mistresses, too, for Nicholas was at all times partial to noble virgins. He placed them as maids of honor at his wife's court; he sent for them in the nighttime; and after a year or two, when he was sated, he married them off to his obliging officers. On a lower plane, there was his perfect acquaintance with the dressing rooms of the capital's theaters. His special agents in Paris offered tempting contracts to French actresses and Italian divas. The Tsar's part in their St. Petersburg stay was going behind the stage and watching now one actress, now another singer, at her intimate toilette.

And if the Tsar wanted the populace to think him a paragon of virtue, he certainly deluded no one when he encouraged the masque-balls of Bolshoy Theater. Men who came to these balls

were of the nobility only, but pretty women even of the lower classes were expected there. Nicholas loved these affairs; he said they helped him to relax after his unceasing labors in Russia's behalf.

Perversely, he requested the presence not only of the grand dukes who, after all, were a loose lot, but also of the Empress. The weak, aging Germanwoman, with that ill-fitting imperial headgear of hers, sat in a box and smiled in a half-stupid way the while her husband flirted with anyone he chose.

Women wore masks, black dresses, and dominoes. Many were youthful modistes, milliners and shopgirls, but some belonged to the world's oldest profession. Men were not masked; their only tribute to the occasion was a black scarf on the arm. They promenaded in frock coats or uniforms, keeping their hats on because of the perpetual drafts in the badly built theater. The white plumes and effulgent tunics contrasted in splashes with black dresses; the men's eager glances were rebuffed or led on by the women's mysterious laughter. A heavy erotic current floated among the hundreds of bodies, charging the air with a nervous wonder, longing, anticipation. Above the crowd there bobbed the Tsar's head, the mouth sometimes smiling, the eyes never; all the time the leaden glance searching for someone young and amusing, fresh and life-renewing.

Masked women approached the men of the Tsar's entourage to flirt and laugh. Couples would detach themselves from the human clusters and disappear for the night. The Tsar too would be solicited, but timidly. A few bantering, tremulous phrases would be exchanged, and, although he would not leave with a woman of his choice, he would nod to his chief of gendarmerie. At once skillful agents slipped out to follow the woman who had succeeded in interesting the sovereign, to make arrangements with her in the Tsar's name.

IV

The rumor of such customs reached Whistler. "Fashion is my enemy," he whispered, shaking his head.

More and more there was worry in his heart: was he doing the right thing by bringing the family into such a city?

But it was too late to reconsider. In the spring Anna and the children were packing. In the summer they were on their way.



A Gentleman and a Cabby
By Alexis Venetsianov (1780-1847)

Chapter Eight

GEORGE WILLIAM temporarily left his job at Lowell to sail with the family, and so aid his stepmother a part of the complicated way. He planned to go as far as Germany, and then return to the States. Anna said she was grateful.

They sailed from Boston in mid-August of 1843. The sturdy steamer *Acadia* crossed the Atlantic in twelve days. Anna's boys stood the passage well; all three, including Baby Charlie, played on the deck with Nurse Mary practically every day. Jimmie, nine, and Willie, seven, proved brave sailors. For Debo, too, this was the first ocean crossing, and even Anna said that to all of them the journey was full of novelties and delights—Anna, who considered herself a veteran of ocean travel, since a long time back, three years before her marriage, she had visited England; Anna, the conservative puritan, who ordinarily frowned upon novelties and delights.

There were adventures, but of the safe kind: the night after leaving Halifax their steamer ramméd and sank a barge, and the fourteen men of the barge crew taken aboard the *Acadia* provided a thrilling sight and topic. Jimmie and Willie hung around them, listening breathlessly and carrying the yarns to Anna with such excited detail that she doubted not they felt like heroes themselves.

On the twenty-seventh of August the family observed Charlie's birthday. As he played on the deck he raised his head pleasantly to say to the amused passengers: "Charlie is two years old."

Anna was moved. She thought he spoke so distinctly, he had so many original ideas.

She saw to it that the usual prayers were said, and that the Sabbath was kept. Little Charlie enjoyed the Lord's prayer as a game, repeating the words after Mary while the ship gently rolled. At six in the morning of August the twenty-ninth they arrived in Liverpool.

It was not a strange land: Eliza, Anna's half-sister, had married

Winstanley the Englishman, and there was Alicia, another sister—single—and yet other kin and friends. Eliza welcomed the travelers to her sweet home at Preston, and all were in tears as Mrs. Winstanley exclaimed: "There hasn't been such perfect satisfaction as mine since Joseph welcomed his family to Egypt!"

Relatives and friends, not seen in fourteen years, crowded to embrace the Americans. It was with a certain difficulty that the travelers settled down to a fortnight's rest.

Radiant weather marked their stay in Lancashire. This was Preston the Proud, the fashionable summer place of the eighteenth century, now fast begriming itself with cotton mills, yet managing to preserve much of its early fragrance. Under the bright sunshine of each new day Anna admired the emerald of the fields and hills. Her boys played in the garden, rode a donkey, and stood willing objects of cooing by the English relations. Charlie's Yankee-baby lisp was ever and again commented upon. If they went for a carriage ride of an afternoon, he would gravely say: "I wonder what Mary is doing! Charlie must go home to Mary!"

Having learned to distinguish the Lord's day, he would say: "Not to pay drum on Sunday."

On other days he tagged after Debo, begging: "Sissie, pay for Charlie."

In his remarkable fondness for music he would lead her to the piano. On occasions when Debo absent-mindedly hummed to herself, he would recognize whatever piece it was and name it.

From the top of a rising green, Anna gazed at an English valley, recalling with a pang the tiny grave overlooking the Connecticut sea—her Kirkie's grave in Stonington—and thinking how much she missed not bringing him to his father. She trusted to Charlie's hug and prattle to lessen her husband's pain.

They went visiting, and there was nothing Anna enjoyed more than to have tea with those of her English friends who had recently lost a dear one. A lady neighbor of Eliza's had lost a grown daughter, and Anna set out to offer condolences.

"God called her to her heavenly inheritance," she pointed out.

The bereaved mother agreed ecstatically. She asked Anna: "Is it not comforting to reflect on the love of our Heavenly Father?"

It was a perfect visit. But it was time to resume the journey. They bade good-by to the Winstanleys, and made ready to take the cars for London. The only showery day they had while in England was on the journey to London. But this was more than compensated by a letter that Anna found on arrival—a letter from Whistler telling how impatiently he was looking forward to the reunion.

To take the *John Bull* for Hamburg they awoke in their London hotel before dawn, and there was a slight but gratifying delay as Charlie insisted on saying the Lord's prayer. By lamp-light and starlight, boatmen rowed their group down the Thames, toward the *John Bull*.

II

At Hamburg, for the first time in their journeying, a strange tongue was all of a sudden spoken around them, and they would have felt lost in the many-storied edifice of the German language if not for the guidance of young George.

They were to travel by wheel for bustling Lübeck and misty Travemünde where lay packets for St. Petersburg. An all-night ride was ahead of them.

The road was fine, the stars shone brightly, the two carriages were most comfortable. Her children were with her, asleep, all in good health, going to their father, and in her happiness Anna could not close her eyes all night. Never in her life, she thought, had she enjoyed a ride so much. But even in this bliss she remembered her angry God. She pondered on the mercies which, she felt, she so little deserved, and wondered from what quarter the black cloud would appear when the time came for a change in her fortunes.

They were crossing Denmark. Stops were frequent before the many toll bars and under large sheds where their horses were fed and watered. By midnight, at one of these little inns, thoughtful

George got out of the carriage and returned with coffee and cakes, almost the best Anna had ever tasted.

It was dawn when she discerned the entrance to Lübeck as a very pretty sight indeed. Their carriages were stopped before the town gates, and their passports were examined. Not many Americans could be seen in this part of the world, and the detention was as brief as the officers' attention courteous. At noon, by stage, they set out from Lübeck for Travemünde and the steamer *Alexandra*.

It was difficult to say good-by to George, and Debo in particular was wrought up. But turn back to the States he must. Seeing them to the deck, he waved a gay adieu, and was gone.

Anna felt it was her duty to stare with Debo at the receding shore, to walk the deck and talk of God, and so ease the girl's sorrow at parting with the brother.

When at last she came down to the ladies' berths she found Charlie in intense pain, and the nurse frightened.

III

The boy was ill, and refused to eat, but still insisted on saying the Lord's prayer. He passed sleepless hours in Anna's arms. She had sent the nurse off to bed, but after a while aroused Debo. The girl's cries of distress brought out stewards and lady passengers, and these were so kind but clumsy and afraid, for what could they do when there was no physician on board?

The complacent Saturday turned into the ireful Lord's day. Desperately Anna recalled those awful days of Springfield and Stonington when Charlie had suffered similar attacks, and she did all she had done then. She found the powders prescribed for those previous occasions by Uncle Palmer, but the boy grew worse, lisping piteously: "Charlie's most done, no more medi—sank you, dear Mama . . ."

He complained little, but his body showed signs of much suffering. He neither fretted nor moaned, but struggled. Inflammation of the bowels, said Anna to her stepdaughter, and both cried helplessly.

By the morning Charlie could retain no medicine. A steward thought that the death agonies had begun. To spare the women's eyes he hastily put out the light in the cabin, but Anna pleaded with him in the dark, and the man brought another lamp. A warm bath was made ready, a stewardess came dumbly offering a blanket, but the boy's feet were clammy and his eyes already glazed.

Anna woke the nurse to say that Charlie was no more. Then, with a leaden-heeled reluctance, she went to the boys' bunks. Touching Jimmie and Willie upon their shoulders, she said that their baby brother was dead, and that his death, like Kirkie's, made the Sabbath day especially holy for them, as each died on a Sunday. Ah, Kirkie and Charlie! She cried out: "How blissful the meeting of these two fine spirits! Now they are forever together, happy beyond our conception!"

The end had been swift and terrible, and now Charlie lay in a vacant cabin, and Nurse Mary kept a tearful vigil over her darling. Oh Lord, see what Thou hast wrought! But who are we even to murmur against Thy will? We are born Thy meek children, to submit to Thy stern wisdom. Charlie had been the happiest and brightest of them all throughout the trip.

"He was so jolly, so full of love," remembered Anna. "I ought to have been warned that he was ripening for the skies!"

God was just but jealous.

IV

Three days later the steamer came within distant lights. This was Russia. The fourth morning after the baby's death they were at Cronstadt. Customs officials talked rapidly and shook their heads, and it was interpreted to Anna that the little body could not be taken to the capital: there was a law prohibiting the bringing of corpses into the Tsar's city. Anna submitted. Doubtless even in this she saw God's will. And so they placed little Charlie in the English church at Cronstadt, and themselves transferred to a pyroscaph.

The day was the twenty-eighth of September. The current

rushed to meet them as the small steamboat went up the Neva. Jimmie and Willie, starry-eyed, exclaimed at strange sights, each clinging to a young Russian whose friendship they had recently made—Count Stroganov, a most polished gentleman, with his indulgent answer to each question, with an explanation for every gilded spire and dome.

The boat stopped at the English Quay. A new swarm of officials engulfed the passengers. Anna was kept with the others in the cabin below, displaying documents and answering endless questions. She was at length permitted to go up, but on the way one more official stopped her. It was then that she heard Whistler's voice from the shore:

"Jimmie!"

They stepped ashore, into Whistler's arms. His happiness was great, but Anna dully thought: "None but God knows the weight of sorrow at my breast. To think that I must so soon embitter his joy! . ." She feared the inevitable question. He ran a glance over the assembled group, he recognized the nurse and noticed her empty hands. He did ask.

Tremblingly Anna begged him not to ask, not to talk in this crowd, this confusion, but to wait until they reached home. He looked at her agonized face, and his heart stood still. His fears numbed him. But he must be brave.

Righting himself, Whistler led them to the customs house where their trunks were already being rudely rummaged through by yet another set of officials. It was so harassing, but here a young man came up speaking Yankee English, and Whistler introduced him to his wife and daughter as John Maxwell of New York, Colonel Todd's secretary. The young man bowed: might he not help? He would stay with the nurse by the trunks for the rest of the inspection.

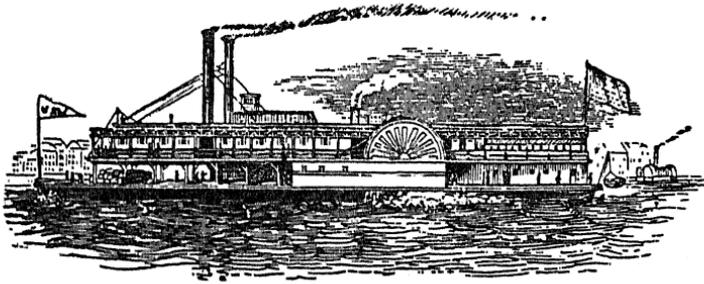
Whistler and the family rode the short distance to the house in Galernaya. They unwrapped themselves and sat down wearily. There was a heavy pause. Then he listened to the sad tale. When Anna finished they were in tears. His head on his chest, he repeated after Anna, although less tensely:

"It pleased God to afflict us on this occasion."

He talked of obtaining permission from the higher authorities to bring Charlie's body to St. Petersburg. But soon he changed his mind: a steamer was about to leave Cronstadt directly for Boston, and the skipper would take the tiny casket.

The next day Major Bouttatz went to Cronstadt and had the body put in a lead-and-oak coffin. Major Whistler sent instructions to bury Charlie in the same grave with Kirkie.

Back in Stonington their relatives and friends felt with quietude that Russia was in earnest claiming the Whistlers. Witness this newly arrived casket: so different from the plain New England style. Instead of the red mahogany or cherry, this was an ornate oaken sarcophagus, fringed with silver lace, and topped with a Greek Orthodox cross, also of lace.



Chapter Nine

COLONEL TODD moved out of Galernaya to Tsarskoye Selo, and Major Whistler rented the entire house until May of the next year. The family found it comfortable, even if too large for their needs. They welcomed the news that Maxwell was to lodge with them, occupying the ground floor where Whistler had lived before the family's arrival.

One of the rooms was set aside as Whistler's private study, and under the name of chancery at once became sacrosanct. The house was already furnished, and now their own possessions began to arrive from the customs house: Debo's harp, boxes of books, a crate of china and crockery, the family silver, and other household gear.

Late September, they found, could be a most disagreeable time in St. Petersburg: the weather remained unsettled, what with the lowering skies, and rain falling as if through a sieve, and with chilly dampness in the air when it did not rain. From the change of climate, also from the effects of the Neva drinking water, both Jimmie and Willie became ill, and Anna watched over them anxiously while weeping at the memory of Charlie. As she supervised their doctoring, as she became acquainted with the house and its staff, she wrote to her numerous kin abroad, and her letters were full of such words as ill, sickly, ailing, medicine, God's will. The word *ill* rhymed ominously with that suffocating phrase: *God's will*. Here, as in America, in the manner of the time they ate largely but with a poorer choice or balance. Their dress was too voluminous. The heating and ventilation of their dwellings were bad. No wonder they ailed continually. Anna could not help but cry over Charlie's death, but she repeatedly assured God that she bore Him no grudge. Otherwise He might become angry again and take in revenge either Jimmie or Willie or both.

Thus brooding, she kept to the house most of the time. At intervals, for Whistler's sake, she tried to appear cheerful, reminding herself: "His year's exile from us!" Whistler smiled

with a will in response to each strained smile of hers. He was kind to her illusions.

Her mind was neither pleasant nor lucid. He understood her fairly well, and so kept quiet about her real self. She understood neither him nor the world. He tried to persuade himself that he loved her. But, as in most marriages, it was chiefly habit, not love.

II

After a parting of fifteen months the family found Whistler looking heartily well. His work was prospering, he said, and the government was satisfied. It would be years before the railroad was finished, but it would be a fine one, no doubt. He had missed his children, and now was glad to have their diminished group with him.

He was, however, irked by the thought of George. The things the youth did! George had shipped a box from Liverpool to his father's name in St. Petersburg but had failed to send a bill of lading. The customs officers would not release it to the Major, and so the matter dragged for six weeks, greatly to Whistler's chagrin. In the next place the lad drew twice on his father without letting him know beforehand. Had the boy no business sense? At the age of twenty-one he should know better!

And the main, the vital thing, what was George William doing away from the family? He wrote to his father of many quaint plans, he wanted to go anywhere but not to the point of Whistler's choice. He should have come to Russia with the rest of them. The Major was in want of an assistant; Kleinmichel had heard of George and had told the Major to bring the youth. If George but knew the French language—what a service he might render his father and himself! The Major urged him to spend the next few months learning things in the American machine shops and studying French. "Come to me in the spring," he wrote, "and then you can judge for yourself how long to stay. Not longer than I do, of course." His son should be able to put up an engine and, if necessary, run it. "In short, George, get all the knowledge you can."

There was a note of despair in the plea, for he knew how difficult it was to make anyone near him do things the way he wished them to be done. Might flattery help? He tried it: "Mother, Deborah, James and William have sung so much the praises of Brother George! James and William both talk always of Brother George—Brother George is quoted as authority on all occasions." The house was fine, the family were snugly fixed, and only needed Brother George to complete the cozy circle.

III

Not many days after the Whistlers' arrival the rain ceased and October unfolded into a delightful season. On some nights, as the westerly wind drove water from the Gulf into the river, the Neva rose, and guns boomed in warning, but this was meant not for the English Quay and Galernaya but for the low-lying islands across the bridge. In the whole month there was one brief day when the river came swirling through the Whistlers' street. But even while their part of the city stayed dry and safe, Anna refused to go out, wishing to be alone with her God, sorrow, and children.

Whistler had thoughtfully manned and womanned the house from garret to basement, and some of these servants spoke English, however sparsely. Nurse Mary, feeling a vague guilt, was of much help. The Ropeses were all solicitude; their third child was on the way, but despite the pregnancy Ellen insisted on having the Whistlers' dinners cooked in her house the first few days while the travelers were settling down. Thus Anna found fewer difficulties in housekeeping than she had feared.

Some of the servants were serfs on furlough from their Russian owners. Most of the wages Major Whistler paid these poor men and women went to the idle noblemen. He felt sorry for these slaves, and Anna too disapproved of the Russian institution of whites owning whites. But what of the American evil of whites owning blacks? Here she was evasive. She said she was no advocate for slavery but, being a daughter of North Carolina, she of course could not be an abolitionist. She wrote to her American

friends: "I can witness to the humanity of the owners of Southern Atlantic states, and testify that such are benefactors to the race of Ham." The blacks, she said, were well cared for by their Christian owners in the South. Were they not taught from the Gospel? Slavery was a stigma on America, no doubt, but with a heavenly purpose: through the religious instruction provided by the Southern slaveowners, missionaries were being prepared for dark Africa. She could find no such divine goal for the white bondage of Russia. Her dear husband was right. Thus they resolved to treat these burdened men and women in their employ as decently as any humans deserved to be treated.

That much for the theory of it. Practice, however, proved to be less pliable.

The first sad experience came when duty at last called Anna out of the house in Galernaya, when both she and Debo could no longer postpone return visits to those English-speaking ladies of St. Petersburg who had paid respects. Anna called for a hired carriage and ordered serf Alexander to come along as footman. But the Russian had a fit of pride: was he not the family's butler? It would be beneath his dignity to serve in any other capacity!

The carriage had to be dismissed, and likewise Alexander. Jimmie was angry, for he had been having fun teaching the serf English. Anna, too, was vexed—for now she had to coach the other servant, Maurice the German, in the duties of butler—but she would not be lenient to Alexander. Sullenly he left.

Presently they also found themselves disliking Feodor the *dvornik*. He was so like a bear! Clumsy about lighting the Dutch and Russian ovens in the house, he nearly smoked the family out. Every step he took showed his dirty boot. His sheepskin smelled. This last complaint was voiced by Debo, and directly Whistler declared that he would pay the janitor his month's wages and send him off.

Another man was engaged to come as soon as the news was broken to the smelly one. The cook, on learning of the impending change, mournfully commented that Feodor had a young wife and child in the country, that he was trying to gain a living for

all of them by working in the city. An exile for the sake of his dear ones! How familiar and moving the sacrifice! . . .

The Whistlers were sorry. They noticed that in the last few days Feodor had improved: was up at five in the morning and had the house nicely warmed before they got out of their beds; was quieter, and perhaps a bit cleaner. Did he know he was to be discharged? Apparently not, for when the new dvornik at last appeared and Feodor was made to understand that he was to leave these foreigners' fine house, the poor man was aghast.

Whistler offered him a month's wage, but seeing the unabated grief added twenty-five rubles. Still the tears flowed down the rough cheeks. Whistler looked and thought—and decided to keep the man.

But what to do with the new servant? He had left a good job for this better situation; he had bought a new coat to be presentable. Whistler had an inspiration: he gave the new man some money to bide him over until he found another place, and he bought his coat. The coat was presented to Feodor, who was then told to find his way to a bath. How glad they all felt at tea when Whistler triumphantly informed them that the negotiation had been brought to its successful end! How they laughed when Feodor, appearing neat and scrubbed in the new uniform, said not his old Russian *khorosho*, but the newly learned and heart-felt English "Good!"

IV

The peasant woman with her boy Andrea came to the house, and Whistler told Anna their story. Anna resolved to continue his good work; the beggar pair should be her wards.

The first time Anna went down the stairs to see the woman and to give her food and money, the peasant fell to her knees and kissed the lady's feet. Anna was new to the Slav abasement, and thus much pained. From then on, to avoid such heathen usages, Anna would not come down to the peasant woman but would send trifles by the nurse or Jimmie and Willie. Andrea meantime climbed the backstairs to the parlor to play with Willie. Through

her moist eyelashes Anna looked at him, agreeing with Whistler on the boy's resemblance to Kirkie, especially after they had dressed him in a plaid coat outgrown by Willie. She was glad that, unlike his mother's, his was not a cringing nature, that this noble-looking child had quickly learned to shake hands with the Whistlers in their American manner, that he seemed to feel at perfect liberty among them, while his mildewed parent waited downstairs for the twenty-five silver kopeks which Andrea always brought her.

At times there was a gnawing within Anna: to think that another woman's child had somehow claimed bond to her Whistler and that now she, Anna, had to be sweet to the two intruders! She scrutinized the Major for some fault or other. And soon she began to feel that in this heathen land even her good husband—my gude mon, she called him with her heavy humor—was slipping from godliness. On a Sunday after the morning service he contemplated going out to Tsarskoye Selo to see Todd, saying: "I find little leisure for visiting during the week."

He did not go after Anna had curtain-lectured:

"You know, as you spend Sunday so will all your work in all the weekdays prosper or not."

She looked with sharp distaste at the Russians who took the Lord's day so noisily. Men and women chattered at the stalls buying and selling fruit and sweetmeats. People were walking and riding to worldly visits. One Sunday she saw two ladies in a coach: they were in full dress, garlands of flowers in their hair, large bouquets in their hands. "Going to dinner, I suppose," Anna said, horrified, and added: "She who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

She picked fault with the English church for its failure to hold Sunday school. The singing of its German boy-choristers was so wretched, the repertory of hymns and chants so meager! How unsatisfactory, too, the Sabbath afternoons in this rich church: morning attendance was good even in bad weather, for most of the congregation kept equipages, but later in the day there was a decrease in numbers, for these English all too easily succumbed to the impious Russian love of Sunday visiting and partying.

And how chill their piety! When she made a point of joining in the responses and the hymns, there were disapproving glances; she felt she was a disturber of the awful silence, but, calling on God's help, she persisted in her audible efforts. Let Whistler squirm uncomfortably, let Debo blush—Anna would not be deterred. Sunday afternoons she led the family away from the English church and toward the American chapel. It was a chapel of dissenters where a Mr. Ellerby preached fire-and-brimstone and William Ropes volunteered as organist. His music was soft and composing to the mind, said Anna, and the hymns proved truly devotional. The Gellibrands, relatives of the Ropeses, were also chapel-goers, and they praised Anna as she wrote to America and England for a new supply of soul-saving literature. By one mail she was overjoyed to receive a package of church periodicals, but the feeling became one of dismay when she heard that the postage



“. . . men and women chattered at the stalls buying and selling fruit and sweetmeats . . .”

A Pedlar-Woman and a Dandy
By Alexis Venetsianov

charge expected of her on this mere half-dozen papers was all of twenty-eight dollars. She decided not to open the papers. After all, they had come through the legation, and the clerks there could decline receiving what they had not ordered.

The Russian law had its incredible corkscrew windings. This was Anna's first unpleasant encounter with its complexity, and even Colonel Todd could not help her to overcome it.

V

Colonel Todd hastened to welcome his countrywomen on their arrival—this high-principled Mrs. Whistler, this beautiful Miss Whistler. A gallant man, Anna thought, as in a profuse Kentuckian style he inquired after their comfort and offered the use of his carriage and four grays. Quickly he proved himself to be an expert on the comparative points of women of various nationalities. He praised Russian ladies for their gracefulness, their unaffected vivaciousness, and the way they combined richness with simplicity in their dress. He liked French girls because they were sprightly. English lassies, he said, were quite intellectual. But, ma'am, no ladies could excel our own females:

"In freshness of beauty, in symmetry of form, intellectual vivacity, and real nobility of character, every American who travels abroad will admit that our own have no superiors in any land!"

So saying, he swiftly declared himself Debo's knight. He found a piano for her and had it properly tuned. He called often and with an amazing ease of manner, to chat, to listen to her music, to strew compliments, to suggest this diversion and that. Whistler looked on coldly. Anna, however, continued to be charmed. The Colonel was a hand at entertainment but temperate in every way, that was certain to Anna. On a Sunday he attended the Church of England service in the morning and the Presbyterian in the evening, and this he furthered with a visit to Count Nesselrode, the Tsar's Minister of Foreign Affairs, where he always found a Lutheran service. 'Twas true that Todd frequented the French theater, but it was mostly for the language practice, he assured Anna, also for the court he met there. Duty,

ma'am! He journeyed daily to the palaces because the same ambassadorial task called him to all those balls and receptions. He sighed tragically: "Such dreadful wear and tear of conscience!" How often he wished—he said—that his office could be changed to one enabling him to tend to the interests of a better world!

As she listened to the middle-aged man's young voice, as she noted that his hair was not gray and that his teeth were sound, Anna took stock of her own body. She was thirty-nine, with many a silvery hair in her braids, but her eyesight was good. Not an old woman, surely. While Todd reminisced of his part in the War of 1812, she took keen satisfaction in the fact that she had been too young to remember that conflict. All she could find in her memory was a sight of bright streets in New York, illuminated to celebrate either the victory of New Orleans or the Peace of Ghent.

VI

True cold kept off well into November, but by the fifteenth the river showed signs of closing. Soon the Neva was frozen. The snowfall was gentle and even, and over the improved roads to the capital rustic *izvozchiki* or cabmen came as an invading horde.

Under Whistler's tutelage Anna tried to pity them. He explained that they were serfs from the interior, that early each winter hundreds of them rode into St. Petersburg with their rough sledges and unkempt ponies to make a trifle of a living for their families, a tax for their landlords, and a bribe to free themselves or their sons from recruiting orders. For the war of the Caucasus was depleting the Tsar's army, and yearly there were new impressments among the peasantry to conquer the far-off mountains for the Romanovs. And yet Anna feared these peasants. They were ignorant of the city and especially of its environs; often they would be lost in the unfamiliar streets, and their passengers had to suffer much inconvenience if not mortal danger. Anna would hire their drozhkys or sleighs for short rides only, and that along no other streets but main ones.

Over the same snow-smooth roads, to the markets of the capital,

caravans of sleighs brought great carcasses of frozen beef from the Ukraine and of venison from Archangel, quantities of iced fish from the White and Caspian seas, and a vast range of game from the province of Vologda. The Finnish fishers carried fresh salmon and trout from the Neva and the Gulf, the German gardeners fetched fine vegetables from the glass hothouses so abundant in the environs of the capital. The approaching holidays promised to be jolly!

Suddenly, two thorough thaws came, changing the pretty picture and sagging the elation. Jimmie and Willie lost their ice pond and ice hill in the yard of the Galernaya house. Carts went through the streets and into the yards, collecting the dirty snow, and Jimmie was alarmed for the future of his sports. But the cold returned, and the boys regained their pond and hill.

In the middle of the Neva ice a roadway was marked with pine branches for the sleds to drive on at an amazing speed. Teeming with traffic and skaters, the river was a sight of novel glamor. Frosts came to twelve degrees below zero, but wrapped in their fur-lined pelisses the Whistler women went for walks and rides, returning to the warm house in a pleasant glow, laughing as they stood in the vestibule shaking the fresh snow off their *shuby*.

On their walks the Whistlers saw multitudes of doves winging to and from the eaves of the palaces and barracks, waddling in the pedestrians' path, pecking at spilled grain and horses' leavings. "I never saw so many birds in winter!" Anna exclaimed. And soon she learned that the dove was regarded by the Russians as a sacred bird, for was it not the symbol of the Holy Ghost? Had it not brought the great message to the Virgin Mary?

Winter in Russia! The wonder of it—and yet no terror.

VII

Whistler was a perfectionist and, like all such men, essentially unhappy. This winter, however, he came as close to sheer satisfaction in life as had ever fallen to his lot. Life, the routine of it, at last went upon its wheels and ran steadily. He could now read and think. He read much, yet always deplored how little

time he had for reading. Literature was a privilege, a refreshing treat after a day's fatigue. So was his flute.

He was a good talker too. This winter he had listeners and evening leisure. At the Galernaya fireside he fondly told of the log schoolhouse of his boyhood—how he had walked to it five miles daily and back, through the forests. These Russian woods were puny compared with the hoary giants of the American Northwest. And the prairies!

His children hung upon his every word as he told of the luxuriance and beauty and dangers of the Midwestern plains. He recounted the old adventures in the Great Lakes region. How he and his fellow surveyors had done their travel and work on snowshoes. How now one, now another of them, had been blinded by the sun-and-snow glare and had to be led by the rope through deep drifts. They had lived on parched corn. What else was there for them to eat? He smiled: "We thought it a luxury when we could get tallow to soften our hominy!"

He described their beds in the snow: they would dig into the white surface near the supper fire until a sufficient depth was reached; then the group would wrap one another into buffalo robes, and the last man had to wrap himself unassisted as best he could.

He told also stories of the War of 1812. He had gone with his family from Fort Dearborn to Detroit as a child of ten, two years before the great massacre of '12. His country had almost lost its glorious independence in that second war with the British.

His country, he said, was his children's country. They must never forget this.

He wanted his daughter and sons to retain the same attachment to the native land that he had. He wanted them to cherish it as a religious sentiment wherever they might be.

VIII

Whistler's thoughts were once more anxious with the burden of that unaccountable son of his, George William. Letters from America advised him that George's health was more delicate

than ever, that it was found necessary for him to go on a trip, but certainly not to Russia. And so, in the late fall of 1843, George sailed on the *Lauzanne* from New York for a year's cruise to the South Seas. An hour after the ship had departed, his uncle Joseph Swift sat down to write to the Major that the lad had left in good spirits and well supplied with books, among them the best book of all, the Word of God.

As Whistler read the letter his face was furrowed with worry, but he tried to tell himself that he was glad George had disobeyed him. The Russian climate would have been fatal to the youth's health, no doubt. And Russia was not a country for a young man to begin a career in, indeed no. What harsh things these Slavs did to their best youth! There was that recent scandal in the engineering school.

He remembered the case:

An officer-teacher had been consistently rude to the students, to those future road- and fort-builders of the Tsar. One day, losing patience, the noble youths hissed the bully. They threatened to chase him out of the classroom should he not modify his behavior. Immediately the authorities were notified, and the students were charged with attempt at rebellion.

Fierce disposal was made of the incident. Six of the youths were birched in front of the assembled students. The flogging was so cruel that the school doctor thought several of the victims might never recover. But as soon as they were able to stand up again, directly from their hospital beds all six were sent as simple privates to the Caucasian battle hills.

The news spread, and there was a wave of dismay in the rabbit-runs of the lesser nobility. The upper *beau monde* buzzed with indignation: to birch noblemen, what an affront! At the Italian opera, when Kleinmichel appeared in his box, cries were heard from the stalls: "Tyrant! Slaughterer! Get out, get out!"

Yet the flare of protest soon spent itself. In a week's time there was again the old fear, the same low bowing.

The Marquis de Custine, the sharp-eyed French traveler of the time, observed correctly when he wrote that the Russians were drilled and governed but not civilized, that their every gesture

expressed a will not their own, and that the only tumult possible in this Empire was caused by the struggle not of rebels but of flatterers.

Struggle—added Whistler—for the best positions at the foot of the throne and at the boot of Kleinmichel.

His son George William's first school of risk and experience would not be Russia.

Chapter Ten

LATE in 1843 the Tsar was returning from his foreign travels, and the whisper sped ahead that while crossing the Polish part of Germany he had been attacked by would-be assassins. Soon whispers became open talk. Since the Tsar survived, a mass of gratitude to the Lord was in order. While priests sang, laymen in awed accents told details:

The Emperor's carriage was crossing a bridge in Posen; in the dark evening a funeral cortège approached from the opposite direction; not wishing to meet it—for Nicholas feared ill omens—the Tsar left his carriage and boarded another. Just then seven shots sounded, seven musket balls whizzed into the carriage left behind. The attackers' leader, black-masked, a lantern fastened to his hat, looked into the vehicle; but on seeing it empty, convinced of his failure, he led his men in a gallop of retreat.

They were Poles bent on revenge for their debacle of 1831, for the hundreds and thousands of their compatriots now slaving in road gangs and perishing in Siberia. True Russians loved their Tsar, and would not descend to such a dastardly deed. So said people in St. Petersburg and in the interior as they re-told the Posen news.

The Tsar himself was not so sure. He liked to play the part of benevolent father to all the Russians, he liked to say that they felt a religious devotion for him, but at least on one occasion he betrayed an inner conviction of a different sort. He was ailing, and his doctors prescribed massage. Nicholas wrote to Frederick William IV, the Prussian King and his brother-in-law, for two corporals of the guard as masseurs. In strict secret a pair of husky Prussians came to the Tsar's capital. They performed the service well, and their pay was handsome. Said the Tsar while thanking the King: "I can always manage my Russians when I can look them in the face, but on my back and without eyes I should not like them to come near me."

He did not trust his subjects, and in these late months of 1843

mystery veiled his movements even after he had recrossed the frontier into his own domains. Not until the customary white standard flew up above the Winter Palace did the populace know that the Emperor was back.

Forthwith, royal festivals began their gorgeous train. To businesslike matters, too, Nicholas turned his decisive eye. Couriers rode, ministers were summoned, and long-pending briefs found their solutions. Foremost among such items was rolling stock for the railroad, the new weapon of enrichment and power that would allow the Tsar to rise above the Polish assassins and Russian traitors. While abroad, Nicholas had been learning a few things about rails. If in 1836 the Austrian Emperor had sneered as he signed the first railroad charter, if on signing he had said, "This cannot maintain itself, anyhow," by 1843 the profits of Austria's rails were proved beyond doubt. As for Prussia, in this year 1843 the King went so far as to guarantee certain railroad companies a dividend of three and one-half per cent on their investments. The Tsar would not lag behind the sovereigns of the Germanics. In December his government signed a contract for rolling stock to enliven Whistler's line.

II

All the scheming of the fly-by-night element, all the chicanery of strangers, had been for naught: Whistler's honest efforts were honored with success as the firm recommended by him won the contract. It was the combined concern of Harrison-Eastwick of Philadelphia and Winans of Baltimore.

The work involved three million dollars and was to be done in five years. The Americans were to build 162 twenty-five-ton locomotives and as many tenders; 5300 iron trucks for eight-wheel cars; 2500 eight-wheel freight cars; seventy passenger cars; and two specially improved cars, each eighty feet long and on sixteen wheels.

The Tsar was to furnish workshops, but the Americans were to equip the buildings with their own machines and tools. Winans

and his partners had no capital to speak of, but the Tsar, rich as the Indies, would give or lend the sums necessary to start the undertaking. The crown shops six miles from the capital, built in the previous reign and known as Alexandrovsky, were selected for the purpose. Russian artificers employed by the state were to be taught by the Americans this new craft of rolling-stock making. Out of their ranks locomotive engineers would be trained, also conductors. Major Whistler was flushed with victory. His lips, blue with cold, moved stiffly:

"I confess, this is a mark of great confidence in our countrymen."

He felt certain that they would acquit themselves with satisfaction to the imperial government and with credit to the Yankee name.

But now he was confronted with a chorus of disappointed voices of those who had dreamt of the juicy contract for their own coffers. Among such complainants was his own brother-in-law, Anna's brother, William McNeill.

Mac was laboring under the angry belief that even in Russia the Major continued as his partner and should have given the contract to the men of Mac's choice. He wrote unkind letters to Whistler on those few occasions when he did write. He was drinking heavily, and charging loudly that his sister's husband was not doing the proper duty toward him.

Whistler felt badly about it. In his letters to America he humbly asked what he could do for Mac. He had some money in the States, in the Swifts' care, and so wrote to Joseph to place funds at Mac's disposal. Whistler was desperately and unwisely generous: "Any and all of my money that you may think could be of service to him!"

III

Dr. Daniel McNeill of Wilmington, North Carolina, father of William and Anna, had been a friend of General Joseph Swift. In 1813 and '14 General Swift, the first graduate of West Point and chief engineer of the United States Army, sought to recruit

as cadets young sons of his respectable acquaintances. One day, en route to West Point, the General met his friend's son, William McNeill. The youth was on his way to theological study with a Long Island pastor, but Swift had no difficulty in changing young McNeill's mind.

"My purpose," the General said, "was suitable to his propensities."

There was the dim-remembered Toryism of some of the North Carolina McNeills during the War of Independence. Indeed, a few of them had not returned from their flight to the Bahamas and other British soil. It would be well to make a true American patriot of his friend's son and thus prove that the clan could not be regarded as wholly pro-crown.

Swift took the youth to West Point, and thus, in lieu of a pulpit, Anna's brother acquired an officer's sword and an engineer's calliper. In time Mac developed into a capable railroader, yet his progress was never steady but in brilliant splashes, so that often it was hard to see whither he was bound and precisely what his life meant.

Mac was building railroads in Virginia when the financial crisis of 1836-37 confused and disheartened him. He came to New York, then to Connecticut. The panic was blamed largely on the railroad mania, and a railroad engineer was not favored. He thought he would again be a soldier. In 1842 the earth of Rhode Island shook with the Dorr Rebellion, and the law-and-order party shopped around for a military leader. Mac assumed the proffered command, and it was said by his followers that he terminated the whole mess with no bloodshed but with great prudence. Nevertheless, he soon discovered that his part in ending the rebellion brought him passionate enemies who saw to it that from then on his career was thwarted at every step, or so he claimed as he increased his drinking.

He would not bow his knee. He and his family were reduced to straitened circumstances but he went from bar to bar, denouncing his foes, blaming the Swifts for not helping him with their influence and Whistler's money, and, above all, bitterly

criticizing his brother-in-law. A story was heard in the engineering circles—and it looked suspiciously as if Mac had started it—that Tsar Nicholas had first called him, William McNeill, to build the railroad, but that he had declined, magnanimously recommending Whistler. And look how he was being treated by his brother-in-law, nay, his pupil!

In Russia, Anna remained blind to the nastiness of his rare letters to Whistler. She would dwell upon the few sane paragraphs; she would say in stubbornness: "All I could wish. So cheerful, so confiding, so affectionate."

IV

Shortly before Christmas, for the first time since the family's arrival, Whistler absented himself from home. On a cold evening he set out in a covered sledge with a Russian officer for Colonel Melnikov's camp. He spent but a short time with the Colonel and hastened to return to St. Petersburg, riding day and night some eighty miles of ice and snow to surprise the family by appearing for breakfast the next day but one.

On the twenty-second of December they did their Christmas shopping. Anna started out by bringing a lock of Charlie's hair to a German jeweler to be encased into a brooch for the nurse. This, she felt, would be more acceptable to Mary than any present she could buy for her. Fingering the precious hair, she thought of little Charlie. Human hopes! Human plans that were stamped with vanity! "Time," she whispered, "is only the school for eternity."

The next day, very early, the boys were calling out in impatience, awakening the elders, extracting sweets from their stockings, and shouting their approval when, led into the chancery, they were presented with Russian pictures and games and those quaint little chairs—just what they needed, they said. Through all this, however, they were aglow with the anticipation of the family's surprise gift to Anna.

At last it was brought forth: a beautiful escritoire, carved of

rosewood, with a fond note from Debo and the boys. Whistler added an ivory penholder inlaid with silver and a card of gold pens. Anna was overcome. She would have kept the family to their seats with long prayers of gratitude to the Lord from whom surely all the sweets, pictures, escritaires and penholders flowed, but there was yet so much to be done for Christmas.

On Christmas day, Colonel Todd called in his sleigh with four grays, postilion and footman, a gay spectacle indeed, to take Debo for a holiday dash. There was also an invitation to dinner for all the adult Whistlers, but Anna rebuked the giddy spirit: "I would not leave my boys on Christmas day."

They had a fine dinner in their own home, with four Americans as guests. Let the Russians have their venison and fancy beef, their sturgeon and trout! Anna would lay her table with the patriotic and truly filling dishes of roast turkey and pumpkin pies. Let the Russians listen to their gypsy songs! In Galernaya the diners heard Willie's recitation of "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread" as composed by their countryman, the Rev. Dr. Hawks. It was to be a holiday surprise to Whistler, and he agreed that Willie delivered the piece in a touching manner. Jimmie was supposed to declaim lines upon the Solar System, but somehow he had not committed them to memory. He and Willie made up the gap and lightened the intellectual fare by reciting French fables—very prettily, the company voted.

But the bitter shock of the next morning!

Anna missed her escritoire where she had left it the night before, but at first she thought nothing of it, believing that the servants had shifted it in preparation for the cleaning of the room. Later she again looked around. This time she was uneasy. The servants, questioned, swore with all their Russian saints or German earnestness that they had not touched milady's writing desk.

Stolen!

And now Whistler searched for his flute, to no avail. He called in the servants, but no one had any idea where the two missing things could be or who might have taken them.

The police were called in. They rested their suspicions on

Feodor and Maurice. Halberd-armed policemen took both servants to the guardhouse to be grilled and threatened. Both wept, denied, and implored.



A Policeman of St.
Petersburg
By Alexis Venetsianov

Whistler promised a tempting reward and no questions asked, but thefts were so frequent in St. Petersburg that there was no hope of ever again seeing either of the two stolen objects.

Whistler's flute! It had been with him for fifteen years. Twice it had crossed the Atlantic with him. His flute—main solace in weariness of spirit.

Anna's escritoire, the tender gift! Had, the night before, anyone asked her what of her inanimate possessions she would rather not lose, she would have named the rosewood desk.

The blighted country, Whistler said. The old dejection, the foreboding of worse yet to come, returned to cause sleepless hours in the night.

Feodor and Maurice were soon released, but Whistler was ad-

vised to discharge them. This he did. To replace Maurice, their old Alexander came back, the queer serf who in a mood of pride had once refused to be their footman, but who by this time was properly contrite and ready to do anything whatever for the good foreign masters. In the stead of Feodor they hired a brother of the Ropeses' servant.

V

From their home on Vasilievsky Island the Maingays often came—an English merchant family, whose daughter Emma was of Debo's age and took a spontaneous liking for Dasha, as in the Russian way she renamed the Whistler girl. Of an evening, in the Galernaya house, the Whistlers would entertain also the Ropeses and the Laws with a cheerful chat about their native lands. William Ropes would now and then say funny things, so that even Anna could not resist the bursts of laughter. Maxwell would come up to ask Debo whether it was not too late in the night for music. She would sing a few songs, and the pastor with his daughters would join. The Laws knew a number of Russian songs, and once Debo surprised them with a ballad about black flowers, singing the Slav words so well! They marveled and laughed, and sang again, and Anna felt that for recreation the Whistlers needed never go from their own parlor, though of course there should be more of sacred music in such impromptu programs. But what would you expect when even the English pastor in this gay city at times succumbed to worldly sociability?

Anna's distaste for Russian revelry was soon an obsession. The beginning of 1844 was marked by two imperial marriages, which naturally brought wide rounds of festivities. The Tsar's youngest daughter Alexandra was being married to Prince Frederick of Hesse-Cassel, while her cousin Elizabeth, daughter of Grand Duke Michael, was the bride of the Duke of Nassau. For a whole week the city was illuminated, bells rang and cannon boomed to long echoes. Maxwell went to a starched function at the Winter Palace, and so great were the crowds, so overheated the halls, so excessive the frosts and drafts on the plazas outside, that he re-

turned not only with exciting tales but also with a bad chill which soon became a fever. Brain fever, said Dr. Rogers. The boys walked on tiptoe, Whistler sat up with the patient night after night, and during the day as well gave of his spare time. Early in February the crisis came, and the symptoms were alarming, but presently the delirium subsided. The young New Yorker was on his way to recovery.

Grimly Anna regarded this as God's finger of warning. Mrs. Whistler was offered a ticket to a fete in honor of the royal cousin, and Jimmie—his eyes shining—tried to persuade his mother to accept. In vain. She would not go and was opposed to Debo's going. Major Whistler was also disapproving, but for a different reason.

"My Yankee girl," he said, "should not condescend to be a mere onlooker, to mingle in that fashionable crowd not as a guest but as a tolerated outsider."

"His Indian pride!" exclaimed Anna happily.

But Debo did not mind being a tolerated outsider, and neither did her friend Emma. Whistler relented.

The girls stood the palace rush and crush from noon till night. In the dining hall they saw three tables with service of gold for the imperial family, and two tables with silver for the suite and guests. They gazed upon the Emperor and Empress, they beheld the two brides and their attendants, they witnessed the court and all its heavy pomp.

VI

Whistler shook his head and Anna gasped when it was reported that at a ball given by Grand Duke Michael a countrywoman of theirs was present, wearing a costume which had cost all of a thousand dollars! The American was Mrs. Bodisco, a girl of Georgetown who had married the Russian envoy in Washington.

The Bodiscos had recently come on a visit to the envoy's native country. That beautiful American woman, the Russians said. The pair were living in the splendor of the Hotel de Paris, and on

first acquaintance Debo envied but Anna surveyed with a jaundiced eye Mrs. Bodisco's green velvet dress of short sleeves, the three bracelets on the round arms of extraordinary fairness, and a heavy pearl necklace fastened with a rich locket of diamonds. Far be it from her, Anna later declared, to condemn those who dressed and acted differently from the way her views prescribed. "But oh," her eyes filled with tears, "I tremble for my children!"

Debo was an amiable daughter. She cheerfully yielded to her father's notions of what was right. He was so proud of her swift-gained popularity in the Factory! But why—lamented Anna—wouldn't Debo listen to her stepmother too? Gifted as the girl was, she might impress this godless society into the realization of its higher obligations. Anna grieved that Debo failed to take advantage of her position in the young world of St. Petersburg, failed to convert others to a more pious conduct. Dolorously came from Anna: "Debo does not think with me on this subject."

Sometimes two and more diversions dowered the girl's single day. Consider this Monday: she was to go to a ball in the Hall of Nobles where the imperial family with all the court were expected, yet, soon after breakfast, their friend Bouttatz, freshly promoted to a colonelcy, rode by with tickets for the opera. Anna pursed her lips, and Whistler felt he must appease her frown: he gave Debo the choice of either the afternoon or the evening amusement. The girl decided in favor of *The Barber of Seville*.

Outdoors a severe frost was gathering its force, but Anna would prove to Debo that she really loved the girl. She remembered the pretty lorgnette which the indulgent Major had bought for Debo some days before—Anna would go out into this cold after a suitable gold chain to hold the lorgnette. In a sledge, under Ropes's escort, snugly wrapped in her fox skin, Anna drove to the German jeweler. When Debo came home, flushed and pleased and humming Rossini's airs, she opened her lovely eyes wide at the present. In her diary Anna entered:

To shew my dear Debo that tho I would not advocate her fondness for public amusements I yet enjoyed contributing my mite to please her.

VII

The second fortnight in February was underlined with extreme cold. The Whistlers were told that such severe frosts had not been experienced in St. Petersburg in many years. For a week the cold was thirty degrees below zero, and though snow fell every day and the sun shone brightly after each snowfall, the air was too keen for the Whistler women to risk a walk or a drive.

That week, in their neighborhood alone, more than thirty people were found frozen to death. At a corner near by, three sentries lost their lives. Sledges drove in from the country with some of the passengers killed by frosts. On a few, the driver and all passengers perished. Postilions were found stiff in death on their masters' equipages. A feeling of outrage dogged Anna: she was bitter toward the rich who in their idleness and frivolity caused the serfs' and retainers' deaths. Why force the boy-postilions to the exposed perches on such glacial days? God will bring the heartless lords to judgment.

The frosts diminished, and the hours of sunlight lengthened, yet daily a little snow fell, fine like dust. Once something of a storm rose: snow was falling steadily, and the streets and roads were like waves of the sea. Such heavy falls were not usual here, the Whistlers heard. Anna and Debo resumed their visiting, notwithstanding. With her hostesses Anna walked through the rooms, numerous and small, all connected with one another as was common in these Russian-built houses, to look at sleeping children and listen to stories of their talents and illnesses.

Increasingly the demands of society, of Whistler's place in the gala world of court and service, made Anna realize that she could not shut off her house from the broad and turbulent stream of civilities and festivities. The Russians made but one concession to Mrs. Whistler: learning of her strict sabbatarianism, they were much puzzled yet stayed away from her house on Sundays. Otherwise there was no escape.

And so, late in February, when the weather loosened its grip, Anna arranged a tea. Melnikov came, his eyes and fingers atten-

tive to food; Bouttatz arrived to vie in compliments to ladies with the never-aging Todd. By the side of her silent husband, Mrs. Bodisco dazzled the assembly with her jewels and smile. But ours is a family circle of homely virtues and no dissipation, Anna seemed to say, as she allowed Jimmie and Willie to stay up in the parlor one hour past their bedtime. Jimmie read despite the music and the hubbub, laughing to himself over the choicest passages of *The Spy*.

Debo was at the piano while Ellen Ropes sang, and everyone was politely enthusiastic—that is, everyone save Mrs. Bodisco who appeared to have had so little ear for music that she did not even recognize “Yankee Doodle.” Mrs. Bodisco liked her seat on the sofa too well, and so kept Anna most of the evening in that part of the room. In great raptures she was telling Anna of the crowded season of pleasure in which she had been participating at the court. She would never return to America but for her kin still living out there.

“No society in America!” the pretty lady complained.

Anna listened with a silent loathing: this woman surely had lost relish for what was rational and intellectual and sincere! For her part, Anna could think of no earthly delight to compare with her family’s hoped-for return to their native land. The fond dream of approaching the American shore, of entering the harbor of New York or Boston!

America? asked Mrs. Bodisco. Bah, there was nothing there except Niagara, and she had seen it. She had no desire ever to return there, the fluffy woman chirped on. Russia was her country from now on.

Russia, the godless land! Why, this woman (thought Anna) lacked the patriotism of the two little Whistlers.

“Our little boys,” she said, restraining her fury, “exalt their native land above all other countries on earth.”

VIII

But the evil currents slowly lapped at her own boys’ minds and manners.

There was that incident of the sledge drive. The two boys were riding in a hired sledge when a violent jolt threw Willie out. Jimmie was more agile—he swung himself out in good time, and was unhurt. The driver was frightened, for in such cases the police were wont to charge the *izvozchik* with carelessness and confiscate his vehicle and horse for the needs of the fire department. Alexander, who was with the boys, persuaded the little masters to spare the man his punishment by not calling the police. They agreed peevishly, but as Willie rubbed his bruises the boys decided that the least punishment would be in not paying the driver. Fifty silver kopeks' worth they had traveled, and the sledge had been damaged, but it served the man right. They came home with bruises and boasts, but Anna looked at them sternly and pointed out their dishonesty. They were forthwith repentant, and urged Anna to send them up Galernaya to pay the poor mouzhik for the repair of his sledge.

Debo also continued unruly. What the girl felt or thought was past Anna's understanding. Debo went to the Island to stay with Emma so frequently, and if she stayed over for Sunday the Main-gays failed to bring her to church. Anna sighed.

Increasingly, incredibly, Whistler was showing his disagreement with Anna. One day the Major took his women to an imperial palace to hear boy-choristers. Debo enjoyed the crowd as much as the music, but Anna closed her eyes against the throng and only then could give herself over to the beauty of this singing. At once she imagined herself among angels and their hallelujahs. All who had gone forever from her brood and acquaintance seemed to be near her. She could hear and see their bliss. Her heart was full.

The choruses were such perfect melody, and solos most dulcet, but throughout the hour's singing the little choristers stood very erect. Whistler nodded in their direction: "How they must be drilled and punished!"

Silently Anna grieved that her husband had allowed his imagination to embitter his pleasure. Besides, she did not think these boys suffered. Discipline was good for anyone.

Chapter Eleven

FROSTS with a spasmodic rigor pervaded the night air, but this was early April and no gainsaying spring's approaching step. Noons, ice in the streets thawed into rivulets. English couriers still carried the Whistlers' mail overland, but soon the first steamers would bring quicker letters. The work on a new bridge ceased, the workmen's hammers no longer pounded on the piles, and the Whistlers missed the chanty as they took their stroll upon the English Quay. People stood on the Quay, leaning against the parapets and watching the Neva. The river ice was like plains of mud because of the filth and dust that had in these last few weeks come from the streets. Daily its breakup was expected, and driving on the ice was prohibited, although pedestrians crossed it.

Passion Week came, observed by the natives in strictness, with no amusements of any kind and court life in abeyance after the imperial family had left the Winter Palace for the week, withdrawing to a secluded place some versts from the capital. Each day the English church, no less than any Greek or Catholic one, was thronged for prayers. The Whistlers had difficulty finding places in the pews and were sometimes obliged to sit along the walls, separated from one another—the boys from Anna, and Debo from the Major.

On Good Friday a string of carriages lined the Quay; to receive communion, many English had come from as far as Cronstadt. In the church the Whistlers saw a number of young officers. This was one of the several occasions in the year when men in the Tsar's service had, by law, to demonstrate their membership in a Christian church. What satisfaction to Anna in the thought that these handsome Russian descendants of English immigrants had remained true to the church of their forefathers!

But it was hard to withstand the temptation! The gold-and-silver robes of the long-haired priests, the sweetly troubling smell of the incense, the glorious singing of acolytes and choristers, all the unreasoning feeling of the Greek church, the paean and mel-

ancholy of it, the Byzantine garishness and barbaric pageantry of it, slowly but powerfully attracted the foreigner after his first reaction of antipathy, pulled and drew him, without converting, to be sure, yet weaning away from his own church.

II

The initial tilt came when Debo was invited by the Laws to accompany them to the great Kazansky Cathedral and witness the Russian ceremony of hailing Easter at midnight. Colorful, they said.

Anna, while driving along Nevsky Prospect, had seen that fine Church of Our Lady of Kazan—with those semicircular colonnades in front, of more than one hundred Corinthian pillars, said to be replicas of Bernini's columns before St. Peter's in Rome. The interior might be as interesting, particularly on an Easter night.

But Anna dismissed the lure: "Debo has not been well lately. She cannot remain out so long after her usual hour of rest."

Debo did not go.

William Ropes came in to describe an Easter service he had once attended at Kazansky. Just before midnight, he said, the priests form a procession, each bearing a holy vessel of gold or silver from the altar. Solemnly they chant as they leave the church through a side door. They make a circle of the cathedral, and re-enter. The people sing: "Where is Christ?"

The priests answer: "He is risen!"

At once everyone in the dense crowd lifts a lighted taper, thus changing the darkness to light. Wide paths are formed in the multitude to spread out all sorts of food. Priests move about, blessing the curds, hard eggs, and pastries. Done with their hosannas, the people devour the food. They gormandize and revel for a week and more, making up for Lent and especially for the intense fasting of Passion Week, and there are many deaths from over-indulgence.

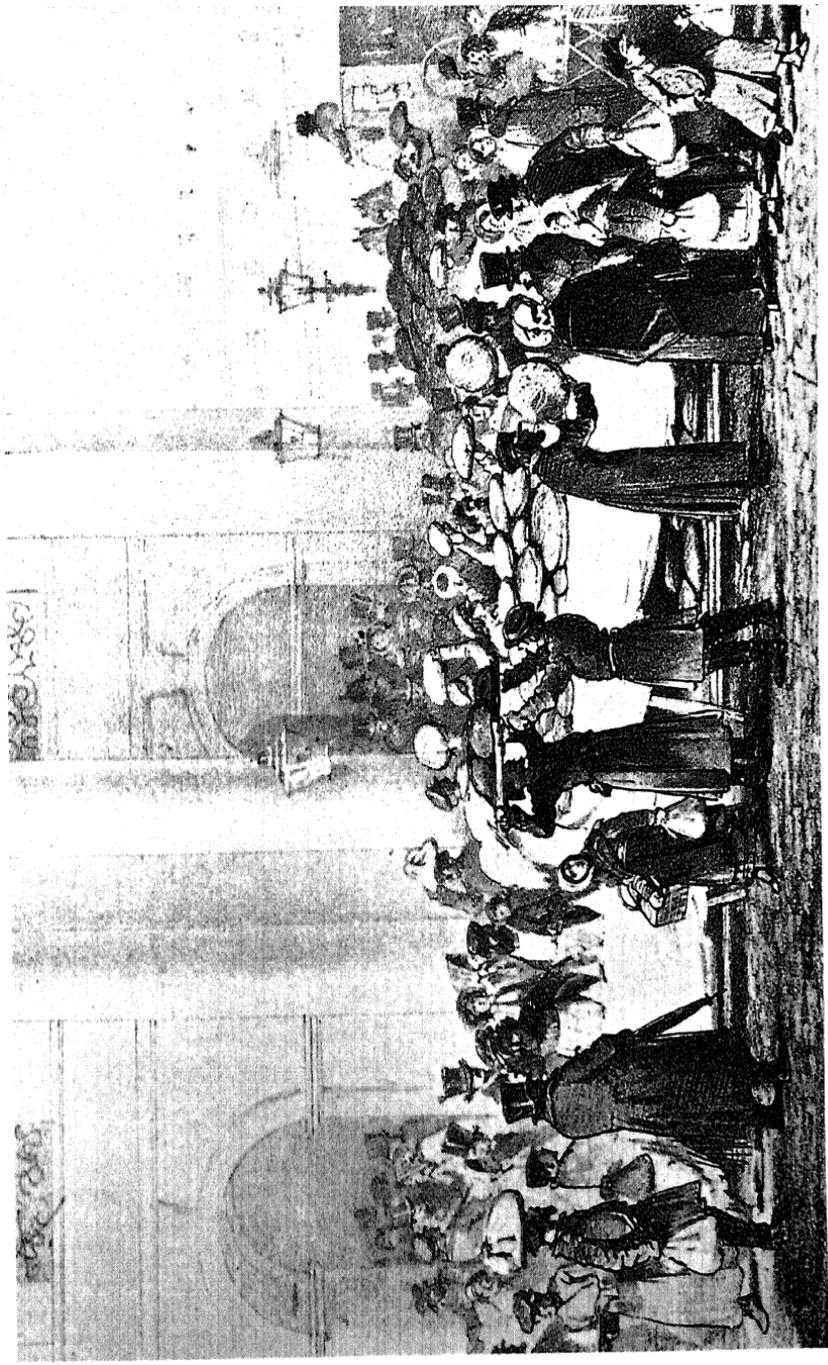
Anna listened, and was of two minds. She deplored the glutony. But how fine that the Russians lighted their candles as they cried out the word of Christ's rebirth.

Early on Easter Sunday she weakened enough to accompany the Ropeses to a non-Protestant service; their excursion was not to a Greek church but to a Catholic one, for in the latter she was sure to encounter less savagery. Returning, it was gall and wormwood to walk through Nevsky Prospect: in contrast to the hush and prayer of the figures left behind in the church, all the fancy shops were loud with luxuries, and the rainbow colors of Easter eggs were at every step. In Alexander Square it was yet more shocking to see the preparations for the Easter carousals: banners flying; men at the stalls unpacking cakes, mead, fruit, nuts, and again colored eggs in profusion; all the chatterboxes rejoicing in the undeniable fact that Lent was over.

When Anna reached Galernaya she found the family up and leaving their rooms. They assembled as usual, to read the Scriptures. Anna's complacency re-asserted itself—only to be disturbed by what she saw on the breakfast table.

An ornament-studded, flower-stuck Easter loaf of the Russians occupied the center of the table, proud gift of the Whistlers' cook. A number of plates were heaped high with colored eggs, some bearing the legend *Christ Has Risen*. These were presents from their servants; even Maxwell's French valet, Laronne, had sent up his share. Enterprisingly, Alexander had selected the choicest Easter edibles and tokens of sugar and wax, had gone out of his way to buy the best he could for each of the Whistlers, and on beholding the result they felt obliged to reward him in return. Each Whistler contributed a bit of silver, so that Anna had five rubles for him when the collection was completed. He took the money, kissing her hand gracefully and saying in English: "Thank you, Mrs. Whistler."

Her heart beat in a prayer that this Slav might leave his erroneous beliefs and become the follower of the only true God, the Protestant God. She asked Alexander to honor at least this Sunday by staying away from the amusements in the Square. She promised instead to give him any other day off he might want, and he agreed to go to church and avoid the blatant swings and stalls.



Sale of Easter cakes in St. Petersburg in the 1840-'50s. From a contemporary drawing by Vasily Timm.



A *gulfanie*, or "walk"-festival on a suburban island of St. Petersburg. Drawn by Vasily Timm.

III

Ever since the thaw Jimmie had been unwell. One bad cold after another, and pain in the shoulder and side, and his face so pale, in disparity to the rosiness of Willie's round cheeks—small wonder that once the boy cried out to his mother:

“Oh, I am so sorry the Emperor ever asked Father to come to Russia!”

But spring was coming, coming. Days grew ever longer. At seven in the evening the sun shone in their faces, and even at eight the daylight was strong enough for Anna to recite from Reade's *Meditations* or sew without starting a candle. She could hardly persuade Jimmie to put away his drawing and go to sleep when the evening did not yet seem to be in full dusk. The sun melted the street ice, and the police aided the sun by making the dvorniks shovel the debris and mud from the pavements. Clear stones could be seen on Nevsky Prospect and other thoroughfares for the first time in many months on that morning in late April when Anna and Debo did their shopping by driving around in a drozhky—not a sledge!

A drozhky, Maxwell once jested, was not exactly a vehicle but merely a bench resting on springs and running on four wheels. Intended for one passenger, it would in emergencies take two. It would take three, said the Whistler women with their Yankee thrift as they took Willie along; in the stores he was their handy interpreter. He stood between them in the small, swift equipage, chattering a mélange of English and Russian, happy with a boy's springtime happiness.

Anna smiled. From England she had recently heard the joyful promise that Alicia might come to Russia when navigation reopened. And in another way, too, things began to brighten for Anna: the Maingays were planning to go back to England once the waters were free of ice; with Emma gone, Debo might find more serious friends. Meantime, on the pretext that the river was expected to move any day now, and the bridge to the Island would be taken to one side with not even a half-hour's warning, Anna

ruled that there should be less visiting between Debo and Emma. The Whistler girl was not well; should she be marooned on the Island, their own Dr. Rogers would not be able to reach her. "You look ghostlike," Anna pointed out. "Your father's tenderness for you deepens daily."

They had never heard a high wind in St. Petersburg, but this April evening there was a threatening, moaning sound in the air, as if a storm were nearing Galernaya. At midnight Debo imagined she heard guns warning of a flood. They sent Alexander to ask the expert opinion of the nearest booth-sentry, and the report was reassuring: there would be no flood, surely nothing like the one of 1824 which had all but swept St. Petersburg off the map. The river would break soon but easily.

Debo could not, should not, go to the Island. Instead, the Whistlers' dvornik was sent off across the uncertain river ice with a note to Emma. He came back the next day with a paper of toffy as present from Emma to Debo and an anxious note of inquiry about Debo's headache. He came by boat—for in the night it had rained, and by four in the morning the Neva had broken its ice.

In the violent break and mad rush the water and ice had carried to the Gulf the pontoon bridge with some sixty soldiers who had been trying to draw it to the side. Because of the February colds the ice proved to be extremely thick; even old-timers could not recall this amazing depth of six feet evident in many of the floating cakes.

IV

So the river was free, the river that flowed into the sea which was part of the Atlantic—of the ocean that touched America's shores! Soon boats would be coming into Cronstadt that had perhaps seen the harbor of Boston itself. The Whistlers hastened outdoors. The new Neva charmed them: smooth as a lake, it bore many boats, painted gay red or green on the outside, wreaths of flowers smiling on the inside, oarsmen in colored shirts let down over the trousers in that curious Russian manner.

But the very next day, ice again appeared on the river—it was coming from Lake Ladoga. The bridge, which had been replaced on the eve, was hurriedly drawn aside.

How slow the Russian spring, how treacherous!

Yet the stoves were no longer lighted, and the upper corner of the Russian window, forming a miniature window in itself, was open in each room at Galernaya.

Chapter Twelve

FROM America came tragic news: on the twenty-eighth of February a big gun had exploded on board the U.S.S. *Princeton*, killing the Secretaries of Navy and State and four other persons. The Russian capital, with military interests foremost in its gossip-fare, took up the distant event with great earnestness. The Tsar himself wanted to know all about it, and so summoned Whistler. Ostensibly he wished the American to explain the plans made for his railroad bridges, but actually, in addition to the matter, Nicholas asked a number of searching questions about the *Princeton*.

This was the first time the Emperor had spoken to Whistler of America and Americans. The Major could readily see that Nicholas had something of the general European notion of Americans as a most reckless people. Several ministers and aides-de-camp were present during the interview, and, turning to them, the Emperor began to relate the circumstances of the American explosion.

"Twenty people were killed!" exclaimed the Tsar.

Whistler interposed:

"I beg your pardon, sir, only six."

Describing the interview, the Major commented in a letter to New York: "His Majesty has an absolute horror of an accident, and the pain taken here to prevent one is sometimes quite ridiculous." To Whistler's mind it was not that the Americans were a reckless people. It was that the Russians were much too suspicious, also much too timid. Everybody in Russia was suspect, he felt, and practically every suspect was doomed. The question of responsibility was most touchy, yet always solved with blunt illogic. "If," he wrote, "a workman gets killed by falling, you would imagine he had been wilfully murdered: the poor officer or architect in charge is severely punished." As for timidity he enumerated its laughable instances:

No one might cross the Neva in a boat if the wind happened to blow a little harder than usual.

Theaters and other places of public amusement were closed in the winter when the thermometer descended twenty degrees below zero Reamur. He recalled that in New England and the Midwest he had met with harder winters and stronger frosts, yet public life had gone on with its customary pulse.

Around every Russian building in process of construction he saw scaffoldings much more substantial than the Americans would make the building itself.

In his own work he was compelled to bow to this Russian fatuity; he was going to make bridges truly formidable in appearance. On this occasion he said to Nicholas:

"My object, sir, is not economy so much as security."

The Emperor with vigor assented:

"We shall spare no expense for security!"

II

In the same spring of 1844 Russian folk journeyed from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt to see the *Kamchatka*, the newly arrived war-steamer built in New York. The Russians were full of enthusiastic talk about the importation from the wonderful Yankeedom. The Tsar had paid for it the tremendous sum of three and one-half million rubles, but it was worth every kopek of it—this finest war-steamer in Europe, this marvel of science and art, all of a piece, a monolithic fusion of iron and wood!

At the Naval Academy a large model of the *President*, an old American frigate, was annually taken apart and rebuilt by the senior cadets. Of the Tsar's seventeen ships of the line in the Black Sea nearly all had been built in the New York docks of Eckford and Rhodes, and they were counted among the world's best specimens of naval architecture. Colonel Todd was pleased to report to his government that the official press of the Russian government contained frequent allusions to the United States as a great maritime power. Todd suggested that Washington enhance this Russian respect for the Yankee sea power by sending on a visit to the Tsar's ports such steam-craft of the latest design as the *Mississippi* or the *Pennsylvania*. Of course, this might im-

prove the business relations as well; Nicholas might order a few more ships from American builders.

Why was Nicholas flattering the Americans and their navy? Why was he building up his own fleet?

Again, mainly because he feared and hated the British.

British diplomats were thwarting his designs upon the property of the Turk, that sick man of Europe. London journals made cruel fun of Nicholas, *Punch* leading with bitter gibes on what he had done to Poland. Not that the islanders really cared about Polish bones and liberties. The great danger was to India: they could not forget how the Tsar's father, the mad Paul, had sent Cossacks across the Asiatic sands to conquer India. It was true that Paul's successor, Alexander, had recalled the troops before they could either perish or triumph. But this bullying Nicholas might yet renew Paul's plans. At any rate he was now reaching out toward Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean, the sphere where the British were making themselves at home.

Nicholas felt that against the British he must have their own weapon—a strong navy. That was why he was refurbishing and multiplying his men-o'-war and strengthening his naval bases at Cronstadt and Sevastopol. The Americans who had fought the British twice, and who yet might war upon them again, would help the Tsar. As he bought his war-steamers in the States, so would he employ the Yankee technical genius to fortify his docks.

There was Whistler to help him. The Tsar would get his money's worth.

Since little railroad work could be done in the winter and early spring, Whistler was summoned to supervise the forts and docks of Cronstadt. Often, when Nicholas wanted to see the Cronstadt forts or to show them off to his guests, Whistler was obliged to precede the august party so as to make certain that everything was in order. The thing called order in Russia was flunkysm, and Whistler could not change it despite his considerable authority. Here was the Tsar's steamer appearing in sight—and at once the work all around Whistler would stop, the tools would be washed and rubbed, the platform where the work was

going on would be hastily yet thoroughly scrubbed. Whistler was amazed and disgusted.

The Tsar's visits were frequent, for he was fond of boasting of the forts to his distinguished guests. On each tour Nicholas behaved as if the forts were his personal and single-handed creation. Worse, everyone behaved as if it indeed were the Tsar's work. And to such dishonest silliness Whistler had to act the role of guide!

All the time he remembered how they had tried to make him an officer of the Russian army. He had persisted in remaining a Mr. Whistler, no more than a special and temporary employee in mufti. Now, looking at the oppression and tomfoolery around him, he was glad of his own stanchness. "I rank nobody and nobody ranks me!"

Servility, servility—he saw it everywhere, and it stuck in his throat. In this land, he said, he saw generals treated with much more indignity than any gentleman would stand in America. Nay, with more indignity than a private would bear in his country's army. The Russians never sought such a thing as redress for wrong—no, not in any shape. It was judged best to pocket every affront. For it was useless, he observed, more than useless to complain. Necessity put these Russians in their places, and necessity kept them there. They must endeavor to please at all hazard. But he remained a free American, there was no force to hold him in Russia, to make him enter the Tsar's permanent service. They had such false standards, these Slavs:

"In a country like this, success is almost the sole criterion of merit."

Credit followed success in an undue share, but often a single failure obliterated all merit—such was the Tsar's Russia as Whistler saw it.

"This," shrewdly observed the American, "intimidates the many while it inspires a sort of desperate energy in the few."

Of these few it made firm believers in the principle that the end justified the means. While the will of the Emperor was the law of the land, his every whim was the law of these few. Indeed, Whistler felt that it was the law of all. "For it is quite as apparent in

the perfect submission of the many as it is in the energy of the few."

The practical engineer in him was outraged, the freedom-loving American sickened. On April 4, 1844, he wrote to Joseph Swift:

"Everything seems to be done for the Emperor. Russia is seldom spoken of. I could never have imagined such profound submission in all things. It is curious to see the extent to which it is carried. I have never heard of an individual, not a *single one*, speak in any other manner than that of enthusiastic admiration of the Emperor and all his acts."

No one else was praised in Russia. To Whistler it seemed to be a deliberate policy of the government that none should be popular in the land but His Majesty. And indeed, everywhere—in every office, shop, home, restaurant—there was the Tsar's portrait, nearly always in the same pose, two-thirds of the flinty countenance visible to the onlookers, the pose which according to rumor Nicholas himself liked best.



Nicholas I Affects Simplicity
From a contemporary drawing

A vast regiment, this country. In Russia, Whistler was more of a republican than a soldier. How great an evil, said he, for any country to have a large standing military force!

But Mrs. Whistler, with some satisfaction, entered in her diary that the Tsar often rode through the capital in a plain conveyance, dressed simply, as if to show that he was merely a servant of his Empire.

III

Friends of the Whistlers talked of the great review which was to take place in the Field of Mars on the fourteenth of May. The review would close the season at the court; following it, the Tsar would take the troops out of the city, to their summer encampment and maneuvers at Krasnoye Selo. The Whistlers accepted an invitation to share a window, overlooking the Field, in the palace of the Prince of Oldenburg.

On the day of the review they learned that the window was on the fourth floor. It was humbling to their independent American spirits to wander through the Prince's stables and then climb the wearisome backstairs. Once they had to stand aside while a daughter of the Emperor passed amid the flutter of her retinue. At last they reached the window and took their seats in the uncomfortable company of some strange officers and their scented ladies.

Below, eighty thousand soldiers were to pass before their eyes.

Here they come, with their field-pieces and banners flamboyant in the sunshine. The avenues of soldiers cheer as the elegant English equipages bring past them the Empress and the grand duchesses. Anna notes the dresses: the Empress in lilac, Grand Duchess Olga in sky-blue, the heir's wife in pink. Suddenly the sun is obscured by swift-racing clouds, and a slight shower makes the regal ladies scamper out of their fine vehicles. But the soldiers continue to march, to converge, to even out their ranks. All is ready at last. The troops stand still. The sun breaks through the carousing blockade of clouds; under its renewed smile the uniforms of every hue seem like a vast bed of tulips.

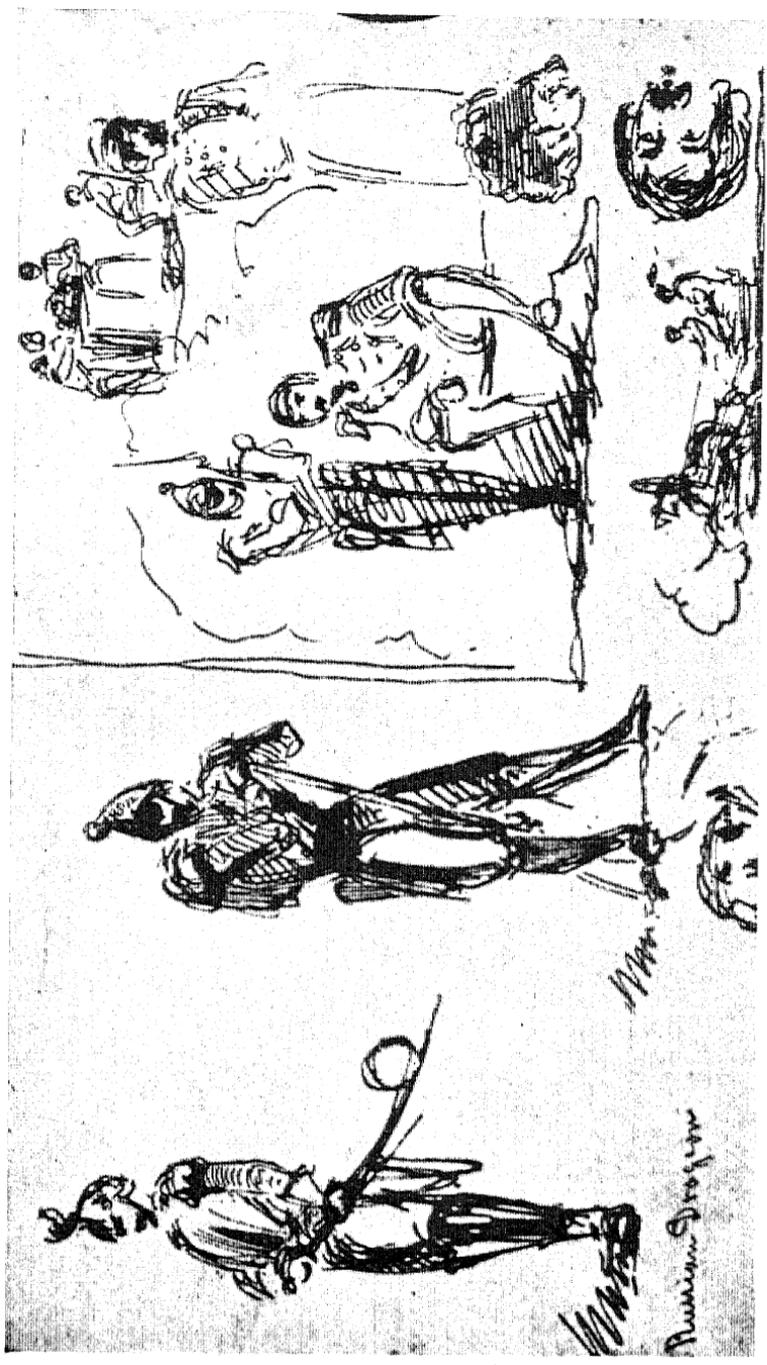
And now the main part of the pageant begins: the Emperor rides forth. The grand dukes follow in a brilliant cluster. The music clashes. The imperial group comes to a halt, and the soldiers start their march-past.

Tall grenadiers pass, shining helmets on their handsome heads, golden breastplates on their snow-white uniforms, immense jack-boots on their shapely legs. Sappers, engineers, artillerymen trot and rattle by. Cavalry thunder on their splendid matched horses. There gallop cuirassiers, hussars, chevalier-guards, dragoons, Polish lancers, Cossack riders, Kalmuck light-horse, Bashkirs in blue coats trimmed with silver, in fur-lined skull-caps, armed with bows and arrows. And here are Circassians in scarlet cloth, with cartridge-cases in two pretty rows arching on their chests. These mountaineers are hostages from the already conquered tribes of the Caucasus; the Tsar uses them to maintain order in other regions of his far-flung Empire as well as to threaten his potential foes abroad. The men's faces are swarthy or coffee-colored, their eyes dark and mysterious. Everywhere, in each company of these and other soldiers foot or horse, men are precisely of the same height and practically the same appearance. All move like one, with the exactitude of well-oiled machinery.

Whistler looks above the parade. On the three sides of the square Field of Mars he sees magnificent palaces; on the fourth, the trim grandeur of the Summer Gardens with that beautiful well-proportioned eighteenth-century iron grille of golden tips, that exquisite fence of granite Doric columns and urns and vases. He thinks of the sheepskins of the ignorant and dirty peasantry at the vast and brooding large of this land. Again he glances below: eighty thousand soldier-sons wrung from their homes and fields while famine rages in the interior!

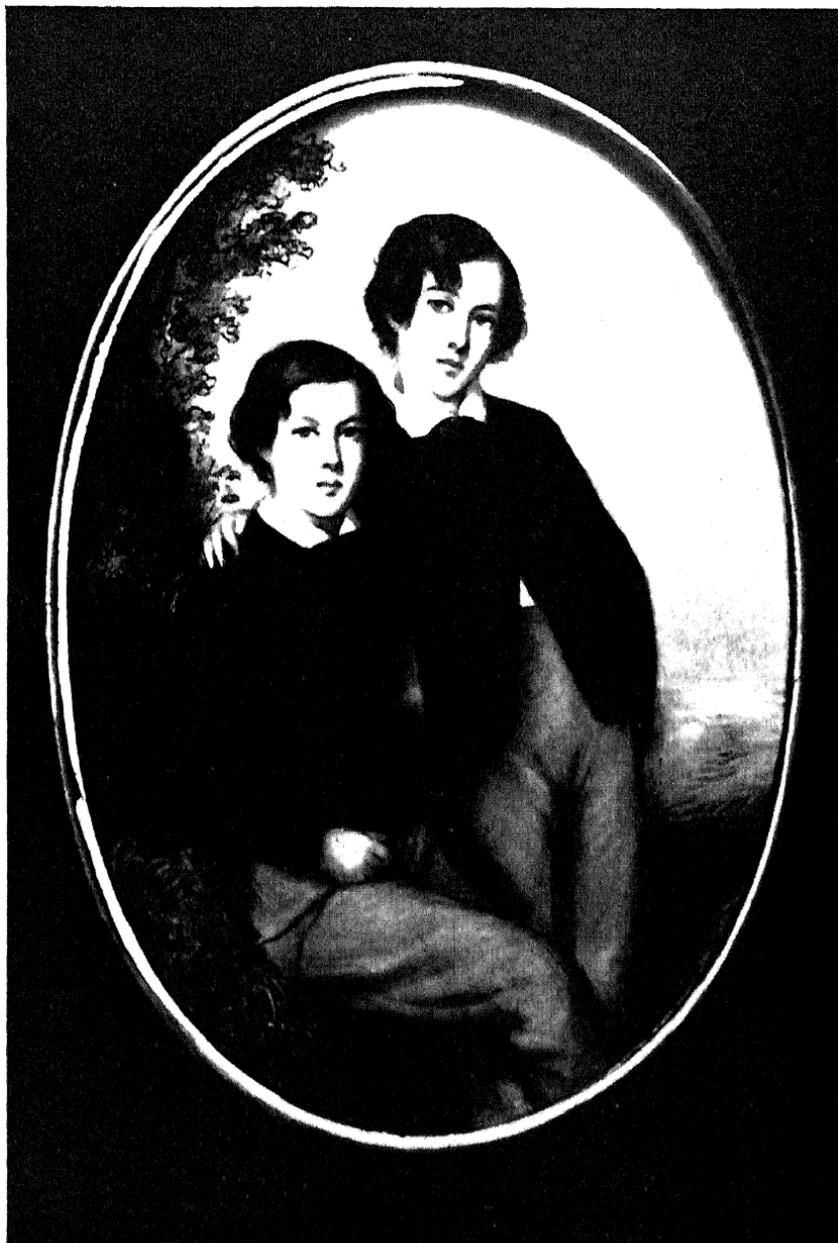
The music blares, the soldiers march—for several hours the spectacle unfolds. The Prince of Oldenburg is a thoughtful man, however: a fine luncheon is sent up to all the windows of his palace. There is chicken salad, and jelly of calves' feet, and the finest cold ham that the Whistlers have ever tasted since coming to Russia. Ices complete the refreshing menu.

As they eat and chat, Anna keeps a watchful eye on her boys.



RUSSIAN SOLDIERS

Sketched by James McNeill Whistler in his middle 'teens, shortly after he was brought back to America from Russia.



Courtesy Library of Congress

THE TWO BROTHERS

The Whistler boys in Europe (Jimmie standing, Willie sitting). From a miniature of the middle or late 1840s. Artist unknown.

She is delighted at the modesty and politeness with which Willie offers to put down their Russian neighbors' empty glasses and plates. Listen to his sweet, restrained Russian or French—depending on the language in which he is addressed—as he answers the queries of this Russian family that seem to like him so much!

But Jimmie—Jimmie is far more eager and energetic than is good for his reputation. His constant desire for information and his fearlessness in gratifying his wishes offend Anna. "For we love him too tenaciously," she thinks. "We cannot be reconciled to his appearing less amiable than he really is."

The officers speak to Jimmie in French and Russian and are amused by his swagger. His sparkling eyes reflect the brilliance of the march-past. He tells the officers he too wants to be a military man, that he longs to serve his country.

"England?"

"No, indeed!"

"Russia, then?"

"No, no, America, of course!"

IV

On such occasions as this, Major Whistler could not help being impressed, in a way: The richness of the Russians' uniforms, the fine show of these soldiers' precise movements on parade grounds, the wonder of this discipline! Even the horses of the Tsar's army were trained to respond to command or to bands in a most baroque manner—at the sound of certain yells or of music they stepped from a walk to a trot, to a gallop, and back to a walk, always keeping time. No less than the soldiers, these horses sprang to action with utmost alacrity at the merest blast of trumpet.

But Whistler was impressed in a way only. He knew something of the cause and cost of this discipline, of this swift blind obedience. He knew something of the bestial punishment to which the soldiers were subjected for breaking the Tsar's rules. Officially there was no capital punishment in the Russian army. In reality the soldiers were executed by being walked between two long

rows of fellow privates armed with canes or ramrods or gantlopes. At dawn, amid no pageantry, the drums rolled as blows steadily rained upon the naked back of the sentenced man until the ordered number was counted. If the man fell in a mass of minced and bloody flesh before the number was reached, he was lifted—hands still tied—and placed on a small open vehicle; thus, unconscious and dying, he was carted to be beaten the remaining number of times. A doctor would from time to time halt the procession to examine the man's heart. If it yet functioned, on with the punishment! Rare was the soldier who survived the thousands of such blows contained in one sentence.

A sensible foreigner in this land, at this sight, was amazed and revolted. To regiment themselves and their fellows, and so please the Tsar, these Russians went to lengths that were ridiculous when they were not tragic. An officer told Whistler about a grand review that was to come off before Nicholas. Just before the Emperor's arrival a general in charge had ridden up to the band to instruct the leader that, while passing His Majesty, all the trombone players of the front rank should shove their instruments in and out as fast as possible. The band leader had tried to explain that this would spoil the music. The general, growing red in the face, had yelled: "Hold your tongue, sir, and do as I bid you!"

The army of the Tsar had more men than any other in Europe. France seemed the Tsar's nightmare and yardstick; he jealously watched whatever improvements were made in the French army, and tried to copy them. England loomed behind France as a greater nightmare yet. Fighting one meant fighting both. But how good were these men and mounts of the Tsar if war came and they were pitted against a first-class foe? The uniforms were too tight for any long marches in the field; the outside metal of the guns was polished to a mirror-like glare, yet the inside was so dusty and cobwebbed that it would hardly let a bullet through. The horses were of fine appearance but their legs were too gracefully thin to make more than a few miles a day across countryside or even along roads. They were fit for circus more than for war. "I don't like war," the Emperor's brother, Grand Duke Constantine,

once remarked. "It spoils the soldiers, dirties their uniforms, and destroys discipline."

The tin god himself—the mighty Tsar of All the Russias—down deep within his heart wanted no war. He tried to gain his ends by threatening, bluffing, double-dealing. This spring of 1844 the Tsar left mysteriously, and for some time the populace did not know just when he had set out and for what parts. The only thing certain was that he had departed on neither Monday nor Friday, for these days he considered too unlucky to begin his journeys. Finally it was announced that he traveled to England. Even then not much was known of his movements—the attempt at assassination in Posen of the previous fall had frightened him and the court into all this secrecy. Nor was it realized that the purpose of his voyage lay in his stubborn craving to carve up the Ottoman Empire, in his futile desire to secure Britain's consent to such division without war.

But if he feared war, why did he drill and groom so many hundreds of thousands of men and horses? The answer was: to play at toy soldiers and at the same time terrorize Russia and all of Europe. Nevertheless, some day the hollowness of the giant would become evident, the bad fruit of regimentation would rot and fall.

Much of this Whistler felt, understood, foretold. It was curious to him that all those bad things should be mixed with so much in this country that was really good. And he did feel that there was much good in Russia, only it was somehow either deprecated or hidden.

How very difficult it was, Whistler found, to get any information in Russia on Russian affairs. The people here for some cause or other meddled little with things in which they were directly concerned. Especially they avoided governmental matters, and at this Whistler greatly wondered. No one seemed to have general information on government. Whistler said that Russians often manifested unwillingness to discuss things and answer questions only to cover up their own ignorance of them. They hid their dearth of knowledge under a cloak of mystery.

The main difficulty, the American decided, was the lack of newspapers. The St. Petersburg press printed nothing but a few selected paragraphs from foreign papers and the Tsar's ukases. Even for the news of the truceless war in the Caucasian mountains the Major was indebted to foreign gazettes.

A foreigner was uncomfortable in this land.

Chapter Thirteen

IN 1844 Harrison and Eastwick closed their Philadelphia shop, moving part of their machinery to Alexandrovsky. Harrison returned to Russia early in the summer; Eastwick came in that year, too, and Tom's brother, William Winans, joined them. They were young, all four of them, clear-eyed and unafraid, eager to make Whistler's railroad hum and their own fortunes soar.

At Alexandrovsky they started out with some five hundred mechanics. That is to say, these workmen were called mechanics, but in fact they were entirely unversed in the intricate processes of locomotive- and car-making. For certain kinds of work no mechanics skillful enough could be found among Russians, and so the American managers sent to Sweden for sixty masters of the necessary intelligence. Presently, three thousand artisans were busy making two hundred locomotives and seven thousand cars. More prosperity was the Tsar's promise for the good craftsmanship, as new orders for engines and steamboats awaited the completion of the railroad.

The three main categories of Russian peasantry were represented among the workers of Alexandrovsky: serfs belonging to private landlords, serfs in possession of the crown, and—the smallest group—free peasants. The spirit of the manor stalked among the machines. The serf-workers had to turn over most of their wages to their owners. The serf-workers were beaten, overworked, and distrusted. When the Americans had first come in to manage the works they had found soldiers guarding every exit and searching each departing laborer. The Americans were indignant, and had the soldiers removed from the posts. Instantly there rose a wave of stealing. Peasant-workers carried off every little thing that could be concealed in the folds of their clothing: small tools, bits of brass and copper—anything that had a value at the nearest tavern. Every morning, at the lathes and machines a number of serfs were found too drunk to work. The Russian authorities interfered, the Americans in silent gladness acquiesced,

and soldiers once more took up their posts. Men were searched, drunkards were dragged out and handed over to the police who stripped and flogged them.

These American bosses did not know either Russia or her language. It was the first time they were doing business in a foreign land. They were nevertheless cheerfully confident. The job was hard, but all they asked was not to be hindered. Early and late they were to be found in the workshops. They were grateful to Whistler and listened to his sage word.

Whistler came here often, riding in his coach or in a hired drozhky past a low row of manufactories and little log houses; past crowds of beggars, or, at dubious best, of peasants playing their native game of bones; past idlers and vodka-swillers, some of whom were so much under the weather that they had to be carried by their companions, while others were left to sleep or wallow swine-like by the roadside. With much relief he would at last reach Alexandrovsky. The main house, occupied by Harrison and his family, was spacious and well built, with a fine view up the Neva from the drawing-room balcony. Extensive gardens and canals adjoined the Americans' quarters, and Neva water was conducted to the numerous bathrooms and hothouses and all such luxuries not only in the Harrison mansion but also in the Winanses' one-story bachelor lodgings.

II

These mechanics of Baltimore and Philadelphia were destined to remain in Russia long past Major Whistler's time—to keep the rolling stock in good repair, to replenish it, to wax rich. Ten years after their start, in the winter of 1854 a Winans in St. Petersburg thought nothing of giving a dinner for twenty people at the cost of forty dollars per person, serving midsummer's fruits and vegetables fresh from hothouses—not only radishes and lettuce, or apples and pears, or raspberries and strawberries, but also rare asparagus and yet costlier pineapples and oranges.

By this time—by 1854—one of the Winanses, Tom, retired from

Russia with a personal fortune estimated at two million dollars. To Baltimore he brought a Russian wife and Russian sympathies. With his Russian money he opened a great mansion in the heart of Baltimore, which thankfully he named Alexandrovsky. The palatial house was surrounded by six acres of gardens which he grandly illuminated at least once—in the early summer of 1855, when news came that the Russian troops of Sevastopol had repulsed an Allied assault. The Winanses, their enemies said, had coined money in Russia, true enough, but gained very little intelligence and none of refinement.

The Winans branch remaining in St. Petersburg was headed by William. Finally, to get these Americans out of Russia, Alexander II had to pay them five and one-half million rubles on top of all they had made previously. Employees of the Tsar's Ministry of Communications spread the story that it was mostly through a misplaced comma in the contract that the Winanses had made so much money. Like the straight line decreed by Nicholas I, the crooked comma might have been just another legend. And yet just as symbolic of old Russia.

It is certain, however, that by 1870 the Americans did leave the railroad field of Russia. Walter Winans, who was born in Russia while his family held the original contract, continued to visit the land of the mouzhiks well into his old age. Though a U. S. citizen, he came to America for the first time in 1910, rather as an afterthought, for he was then fifty-eight years old. On his English estate Walter Winans kept Russian carriages and dressed his English coachmen in Russian style. To Russia he would go mainly to hunt, also to visit his exalted friends; until his death, which occurred in 1920, he treasured the numerous decorations and rich gifts his family received from the last four emperors—the two Nicholases and two Alexanders.

III

The first time they took the cars on the short railway Gerstner had built, the Americans in St. Petersburg could not be impressed with it. How inferior seemed this rolling stock compared with

what Major Whistler and his American mechanics would build for the Tsar!

By 1844, in the few years since this brief road to Tsarskoye was first opened to traffic, the iron steed had truly grown. It was by now assuredly more than a boiler on a platform. There was a bumping block ahead—the faint suggestion of the cowcatcher to come; and regular lanterns were replacing the early pine knots stuck in a box of sand above the bumping block. On many railroads in Western Europe and America travel by night was becoming so safe that railmen were doing away with the pilot engine running in front of the real one. Snake-heads—the iron rails bursting, curling, and breaking through the floor of train-cars—still maimed or killed passengers, and often derailed and wrecked entire trains, but smart engineers were already finding ways and means of combating the evil, of preventing these “iron-headed reptiles” from causing too much damage.

Order was being introduced as trains moved up and down the roads. No longer did crews of two trains meeting on a single-track engage in fist-fights over the right of way. Engine-drivers and conductors were learning to be more dignified—there were the initial contraptions that would soon emerge as covered cabs for the drivers; there were the bright, neat uniforms for conductors, who were called captains and enforced a discipline among passengers that was almost military.

Locomotives, as in the 1830s, bore individual names and were painted blue, green and red and had many brass ornaments, but the experiment of a double-deck car was already given up, and so was the strange conveyance that looked like a Gothic hencoop. Cars were graduating from the early stage-coach curves and curleycues to the straight lines of sober rectangulars.

“Captains” could communicate with the engine driver in a manner easier than the old-time way of climbing and running over the car-roofs. Instead of the early tin horns there were bells and gongs and that marvelous chance discovery of a hoot-whistle caused by escaping steam; all these added to safety and speed as well as noise.

The tender used to be a mere platform behind the locomotive,

upon which were placed whisky barrels full of water, a leather hose leading from these to the boiler, an awning stretching over the platform to guard the wood from the chimney's sparks. In the 1840s the platform was becoming a solid truck, with better containers for water and better ways of feeding it to the boiler.

To be sure, there were occasional lapses. By 1844, the heads of the Northern Cross Railroad of Illinois, disheartened by one mishap and another, abandoned their locomotive and substituted mule power on the rails. In the winter of 1844 three companies applied to the legislature of that state for charters to build not railroads but those primitive Russian plank roads so favored in Canada. Yet it was in 1844 that Robert Stephenson patented his Mammoth, the first three-axle locomotive with connected axles—a type so efficient that it was to last for the next half-century throughout most of the world. Coal burners were rapidly gaining upon wood burners in the grand middle 1840s. This year of 1844 the first commercial line of electric telegraph was strung by Morse, with the aid of a federal grant, connecting Washington and Baltimore, but the use of telegraph for railroad dispatch would not come until 1851. In 1844 the railroad builders were, however, quite proud of their arrangement whereby all trains going west had to halt at regular stopping places and switch over to sidings to let the east-bound trains pass; quite proud, too, of such aids in spotting approaching trains as lookout poles and spy-glasses at stations.

Yes, by 1844 the railroad seemed adult. The Winanses, Harrison, and Eastwick were confident of success as they rolled up their sleeves ready to assist Major Whistler—ready to help him bring the far triumphant cry of a locomotive nearer to this bleak Russian reality.

IV

As if to compensate for the unusual colds and hardships of the preceding winter, the summer of 1844 started sooner than was its northern custom. Whistler was glad. He already knew that the working season of Russian outdoors was short, lasting from about

the first of June to the first of December at the most. And so he called for veritable armies of laborers. In response to the call, thirty-five thousand men were brought.

As in the previous season, he kept on saying that the job was on the whole easy, for the country was so level. Yet he decided not to conform to the natural surface. The road was to go above it, and thus be out of the reach of water and snow. Nearly the entire road was to be an embankment. But, he said, the task was not difficult, the great amount of earthwork to the contrary. As the few really difficult spots he would concede the Valdai hills alone. Well, yes, he would add to that a certain stretch between the Volga River and Moscow. The diggings were the deepest there, and the embankments the highest.

The Russians complained that the summer of 1844 was a wet one. Nonsense, said Whistler, the rains gave no inconvenience. You excavated for this railroad as easily here as you would for a cellar back in America.

In fact, he declared, one of the most remarkable things in comparison with any other part of the world he had seen was the dryness of these Russian soils. This particular summer might be rainy indeed, but generally summers were dry in this country. So he believed, so he said. No slides threatened his plans. Excavation was carried on all summer without the least necessity for any provision for draining.

Because the roadbed was to be of more than usual width, earth was removed in enormous quantities. At first there was but one excavator—the one brought by the Major himself. Later, at Whistler's insistence, three more were brought from America along with William Crane, a mechanic. The machines often broke down on stony ground and in Russian hands. Repairs were entrusted to contractors, but these disliked the machines that competed with their serf-manpower. There was so much grief whenever a machine was stalled and silent that at length all the excavators were sold. They ended their careers in the pit of an Ural mine. On Whistler's line, work was continued by hand.

Whistler was sometimes annoyed, sometimes amused, by the fuss made over this earthwork. He said that earthwork was done

in Russia in a style the Americans at home knew little about: it looked so important—as important as anything else on the job, although actually it was the least significant part of railroad construction. All burrowing pits and spoil-banks were disposed in the most regular form with their slopes extremely neat. In truth, the slopes and their various intersections looked on the ground as a problem in descriptive geometry used to look to him on paper in the old days at West Point.

Thus, Prussia and her patterns weighed heavily over Russia and her progress.

V

Along Whistler's line, men continued to be flogged, men died of scurvy in their damp and cold sod-huts. Men were systematically underfed and underpaid, so that in time this job of building the first Russian railroad of importance was facetiously referred to as *An Experiment of Training People Not To Eat*. The persistent rumor had it that Kleinmichel wanted to show to the Tsar at what smart pace a railroad could be built, and so spared neither the lives nor the health of the workmen. In later years the total cost of Whistler's line was estimated at five thousand serf-lives.

Spokesmen for the government claimed that the railroad was a boon to mouzhiks, a source of work paid poorly, yes, but paid. The villages closest to the line profited, did they not? They sold not only their labor but also sand and stone hitherto valueless and useless. And timber—one must not forget timber. Whoever of the mouzhiks had timber for sale made a little more money, for, as the line pushed along its four-hundred-and-twenty-mile course, the much-needed wood rose in price.

The rumors, charges, and complaints were nevertheless disturbing. Nicholas took measures: in the spring of 1844 he ordered the establishment of special railroad gendarmerie.

Officially, the new hounds were to see to it that the workers were comfortably sheltered, well fed with fresh and ample food, and doctored when falling ill. The real mission was of course to keep everybody under close surveillance; the two high and six

junior officers were to command the ten non-coms and seventy-two privates guarding against disorder in men's thoughts and acts.

Now, along Whistler's line, the sky-blue uniform of a gendarme was everywhere. The sight of it was dreaded, and men scuttled aside if they had time to do so unnoticed, or stood as if frozen to the spot when it was too late to escape. Spies sent in reports all too often. Engineers and contractors were called to the carpet with the suddenness of a summer storm.

Baron Tisenhausen was in active charge of spying. He was only a lieutenant and eager for promotion. Constantly riding, walking, questioning, noting and reporting, he seemed ubiquitous and omniscient. On occasion he would disguise himself as a traveler; thus unobserved and unfear'd, he would listen from a carriage to rumor and grumble. But there was a slit in his armor: he was partial to bribes. Contractors humored him with money discreetly handed in envelopes, also with cases of expensive wines.

His gendarmes looked after the serf-laborers' spiritual welfare also: six military field-churches, borrowed from the grenadier corps and an artillery division, were erected by these police along Whistler's line. Priests and their assistants were borrowed with the churches. A field-church was nothing more than a tent with sacred equipment made of canvas. To show to the serfs precisely what branch of the Tsar's service bossed these churches, two emblems were painted on the holy gates of the altar screen: an all-seeing eye on the left gate, and an all-hearing ear on the right one. Soldier-orderlies were the priests' household servants. Each November, when work on the railroad stopped, the priests with their staff and holy tents were sent back to the proper regiments whence they had been borrowed—and so until next spring, when once again the gendarmerie escorted them to Whistler's line.

VI

Though actually wielding most of the power, officially Baron Tisenhausen was second in command. Chief of the railroad gendarmerie was Prince Beloselsky-Belozersky. In his veins Rurik blood pulsed, more ancient and thus nobler than the blood of the

Romanov dynasty. Married to a high courtier's kinswoman, he was one of the few men in the Empire whom Kleinmichel handled with care. On trips to Moscow, Kleinmichel always stopped in the Prince's mansion.

An oldish lean general, the Prince was full of quirks which his friends preferred to find good-natured. There were, for instance, his instructions to the gendarmes on the ritual of welcoming Kleinmichel. The men's exact posts and poses along the route were specified, also the answers they were to make to the satrap's questions. After each prescribed response the Prince wrote: "Not a word more."

The priests of the field-churches attached to the railroad were to parade with golden crosses dramatically outstretched to the high visitor. In Paris, an editor got hold of a copy and with much glee published the instructions in his magazine. Sensitive to foreigners' ridicule, the St. Petersburg authorities ordered the church parades to be discontinued.

This management of railroad gendarmes and railroad priests, exciting though it was, did not abound in profits. The Prince therefore sought additional duties, of more scope for garnering rubles. With Kleinmichel's help he became a contractor to the railroad he guarded, and in a short time he made much money for himself—and much trouble for Whistler.

It was bolts for the bridges that the Prince set out to supply. Bridges were considered a most vulnerable part of railroad construction; they were comparatively a novelty, especially those introduced by Whistler. Wishing no sudden wrecks, the American demanded high quality in whatever material was bought for the bridges, and bolts had to be particularly good. On this score Whistler wrote a long list of instructions to his inspectors. A detail on which he insisted was that the bolts should be manufactured in plants near St. Petersburg or Moscow, where inspection would be convenient and delivery quick.

But Kleinmichel had his own designs. For a huge bribe he let the contract to Prince Beloselsky-Belozersky, to him of the Rurik blood, to that eccentric gendarme who also happened to own iron works in the distant East of Russia. Two engineers were sent to

the steppes of Orenburg to view and accept his bolts. They reported the bolts to be good, and brought back a considerable quantity of them.

While on a tour of inspection, Whistler examined the Prince's bolts and found them bad. Another test, at Alexandrovsky, also proved them unfit. There was a scandal.

For such handiwork the Prince should have been punished. He was, however, too powerfully close to the Tsar. The Prince-gendarme preserved the money he had gained in the deal; all that could be done to him was force him into a retirement. The two engineers who had accepted the bolts were picked as goats: they were investigated and tried. During the trial the Prince's guilt, nevertheless, became evident. At this point, conveniently to everyone if not to himself, Prince Beloselsky-Belozersky ended his earthly days. And this is how it came to pass:

The Prince among his other hobbies was fond of frequent rounds of the railroad camps in search of serfs who needed medicinal blood-letting. For he was convinced that blood-letting was most essential to the conservation of men's health. An assistant-surgeon accompanied him on such trips. Spotting a group of ditch-diggers the pair would approach to inquire whether any of the mouzhiks were feeling ill enough to be bled. If no one volunteered, the Prince would make a speech on the beneficence of bleeding, and out of the dull group a man or two would at last come out to please the nobleman. The assistant-surgeon would become busy while the Prince watched happily. On one occasion, in his search for such prospects, the Prince was incautious enough to visit a hospital for victims of typhoid. He became ill and died.

VII

That summer of 1844 twelve additional engineer-lieutenants were sent to Whistler's line, young graduates of the military school of communications. Twelve more were needed, and so twelve more were sent. These were not even graduates, but in the last year of their schooling, with rank of lieutenant-junior. They were yelled at, shoved around, and constantly disciplined. Their school-

teachers charged them with ignorance: in May the lads were examined in their own native Russian with sorry results—they could not write a single sentence without most absurd errors of grammar. Kleinmichel on the other hand accused them of too much knowledge, thundering: "That school is a den of vice, of banditry, of liberalism! I will smash that spirit!"

On the least provocation, should they dare as little as wearing in their off-hours civilian hats instead of the uniform shakos, he sent these military engineers to be locked up in the nearest guard-house.

Brutality was handed down, from rank to rank. The Emperor mistreated his generals, the generals belabored their officers and contractors, and these in turn trod upon serfs. The serfs, naïvely, thought that only in the Tsar was their hope.

On a rainy day in the summer of 1844 two hundred serfs dropped their spades and ran toward Tsarskoye Selo, the Village of the Tsar, near which they happened to be working. It had suddenly dawned upon them that Tsar Nicholas—their White Father—lived within complaining distance. Surely he was not aware of the bad treatment accorded to his serf-children. They ran toward the palace to tell the Tsar of their wormy food, broken footwear, difficult and short-paid labor.

Officers and contractors sent mounted courtiers ahead of the serfs to alarm the commandant of the palace. Soldiers of foot and horse were thrown around the Tsar's grounds. When the earth-diggers came to the living fence, soldiers leveled bayonets at them, and an officer came out to shout: "Disperse!"

The peasants knew but one way. They fell to their knees, and they touched the officer's boots with their hairy heads: "Little pigeon, let us see the Tsar! We are walking toward him to show what bread they feed us!"

The officer bared his sword, signaling to the soldiers to come forward. The mouzhiks rose to their feet, turned back, and ran, the troopers pursuing them.

Later that summer, ninety other earth-diggers of the railroad ran away, this time to Moscow, the warmhearted city. They too

were caught and brought back. Baron Tisenhausen went among them to find and birch the leaders.

There were some who ran away and could not be apprehended. Night robberies in the region were soon blamed on such desperate serfs. Apprised of the spreading menace, the Tsar ordered two squadrons of hussars to surround the neighborhood and catch the culprits. The gendarmes patrolled their beats with a renewed zeal. A report from their officer read: "On this trip I met with no such seditious conditions as had prevailed before. Those guilty of rebellion were punished by me, and now they more or less understand my designation, my goal, and my principles."

Kleinmichel informed the Tsar that the officers of the railroad gendarmerie were carrying out their duties heartily and conscientiously. The ordinary gendarmes were the Tsar's servitors no less faithfully. Nicholas replied that he was grateful to the officers, and that to each private in the gendarmes' ranks a handsome reward should be given: two rubles in silver.



From Oliphant's
The Russian Shores

Book Two

Chapter Fourteen

THE thirteenth of May was the Russian first of the month and famous for the traditional fete at the suburban Ekaterinhof.

Streams of people hastened toward the grove from early in the morning. Some walked, others engaged drozhkys, still others were rowed down the canal in two- and four-oared yawls—those queer little craft with covered sterns for passengers. The merry-makers traveled in family groups and with servants, and they brought along their samovars, pillows, rugs and all manner of food and drink. Plain folk had no pillows or rugs and so sat on the ground, or ambled through the alleys, gaping at the numerous panorama-tents, or patronizing open buffets stocked with drinks, or whirling into dizziness on swings and carousels. By three or four o'clock in the afternoon the richer people joined the festival in their carriages. They seldom left the vehicles. Their part in the show was riding slowly through the park, in two orderly and colorful rows, one past the other.

This holiday, this First of May, officially marked the beginning of the summer season. It happened but rarely that the weather on this day, or in fact within the following week or two, was balmy enough. The government of Nicholas I stood for no nonsense: this must be summer, and in a rash of regulations all the officers and officials had to dress lightly, while all the students military and civil were to change to pantaloons of white canvas or gray nankin; an overcoat was permitted only if worn cape-like. Even though already in April evenings were very light, the street lamps continued to burn through the milky whiteness and were extinguished promptly on the Russian first of May. They would be out of commission until August the first, although in late July nights were so dark that people stumbled through the streets in a purblind fashion. The government of the Tsar decreed that the summer lasted from the first of May to the first of August, and so it must be.

And yet these people of the Tsar were stubborn. Anna noticed

that even on this holiday they would not be as merry as ordered. In all their festivals she sensed no genuine gladness of heart. No jolly laugh was heard, no bounding step seen. She commented: "They swing, or ride on hobby horses with the same decorum they would enter church."

II

Whistler's house rent was up on this May holiday. Doctor Rogers said that for the health of the boys it was necessary to be in the country the four summer months. Whistler took this as an opportunity to move altogether, so as to return in the fall to another house in the city, of less rent.

And so they moved to a place three and one-half miles from the city barrier on the road to the fountains of Peterhof. The countryside was fragrant with bright-green turf and dark-green trees of rough-white trunks. It was, Whistler remarked, much more like the banks of the Potomac than sixty degrees of the northern latitude. Once a palace had stood here, built by the late Tsar Alexander I for his mistress, Princess Naryshkina. Now the area was called Dom Drury, or the House of Drury, after an old Russian gentleman of the English-sounding name who owned many serfs and numerous cottages in the region. It was one of his buildings that the Whistlers had as their *dacha*, or summer retreat.

May rains laid the dust for which the Peterhof road was notorious, and so travel was pleasant for Maxwell and the Ropeses and other friends who came to visit the Major's family. The distance from the city was short: you could reach it with your hand, as the Russians said.

In dust or mud, the road was ever full of the clank and clatter of passing troops, for this was the main route out of the capital to the summer camps. Many of the soldiers sang as they marched or rode, and the wild strain of their ballads was becoming familiar to the Whistlers. At all times the road was alive with people of various ranks intent on pleasure. "Falsely called pleasure!" Anna

said in bitterness. She said she was no longer surprised to see the lower classes fill the shop doors and windows, idling and gazing as the troops marched by. But she wondered, she said, to find ladies and gentlemen seated in their dacha-houses close to the road, observing all that passed.

And not only Russian gentlefolk, but English too! There were many English summering in their fine dachas along the Peterhof road. Here they unbent even more than in the city. Their parties, picnics, and games were frequent and noisy in a Russian manner.

Debo was as popular here as she had been in the city. She went to parties and on rides, she played games, but between times she studied music and taught the boys. She also had a German master, and presently spoke the language tolerably well. Anna helped with the boys' studies, and herself investigated the complexities of the French and Russian languages. In addition, Jimmie had a Swedish tutor—a draftsman who worked for Whistler and had wanted to make some extra money by schoolmastering. Thanks to a friendship developed with a few Russian cadets visiting a neighboring dacha, the Whistler boys improved their fledgling-Russian, and the Major increasingly used them as his interpreters.

Whistler's collaborators continued to call both on business and socially. Anna said that General Destrem was very intellectual, that Colonel Bouttatz was so helpful, while Colonel Melnikov seemed quite accomplished, although he would come to dine at the Whistlers' plentiful board rather unexpectedly and even brought his brother. But she would make no strangers of them, said Anna. Yet, as she listened to the French palaver between Debo and the two gentlemen, there would be a twinge of jealousy in her, and she would resolve to redouble her efforts to learn the elusive tongue.

Maxwell stayed at the Major's a few days at a time, playing with the boys and telling them stories, fishing for perch in the pond with Jimmie, planting daisies with Willie. A pedlar would bow at the gate, and there would be a surge of bargaining in Russian and much laughter in English as the boys talked their friend into buying a few bargains. Once Maxwell made bold to buy two presents for Debo: a workbasket and a jumping rope, and Anna

was gratified; these were good symbols, she said, of industry and exercise.

III

After a few days of sunshine the ground would be dry enough, and the mosquito cloud less ferocious, for the family and their callers to take walks and drives.

They walked in the nearby groves, along the winding avenues of birch, which enclosed now a lea carpeted with wild flowers, now a lake bright with boats. They picked armfuls of lilies of the valley and of dahlias and forget-me-nots. The setting sun gilded the woods as the Whistlers walked back.

On their drives they ventured far along the road toward Peterhof, or across the many bridges to various islands. Name plates were at the gates they passed. Here were princes' and nobles' Italian-style villas, shell-chateaux, and fantastic cottages. Lawns abounded in miniature Grecian temples, Chinese pagodas and eclectic colonnades. Parks and forests crowded to the very shore, vine-covered pavilions loomed up suddenly, and flowers filled the terraces to the edge of dark-blue waters. In the distant island groves gay rockets were let off and many colored lamps twinkled. Smelling the strong perfume of flowers, listening to the lilt of far-off music, Maxwell would remark: "It is easier to think of the banks of the Arno than to believe that only thirty years ago all this was a complete swamp!"

On their return, to remind them of the fatherland, Whistler read American newspapers aloud, while Anna sewed and the boys played quietly. Then, after a snack of bread and milk, the boys would go to bed and Anna would read to them awhile. Later the adults had their coffee. This would be after nine in the evening, yet so pale were the northern nights that the Whistlers did not have to light candles until the time for their Bible reading and bedtime prayers.

As everywhere else in this glorious but irritating Russia, thieves were rampant in the neighborhood, and the Whistlers locked their outside window-shutters. Through the night, watchmen

kept up the tattoo of their sticks and rattles to demonstrate to both the masters and the thieves that the guard was sharply open-eyed. Whistler and Maxwell were amused by the noise, but Anna was bothered. This nation of thieves! She still mourned her escritoire and the Major's flute. Oh, if only these Russians remembered their Christ!

She did not know the natives' folk-saying: "Even our Savior would have stolen if his hands had not been nailed!"

IV

On Whitsunday, despite the rain, every shop was filled with boughs and flowers while every house gate sported a few green branches. For this occasion their landlord sent to the Whistlers a dozen plants from his greenhouse; hydrangeas with those showy blue-headed flowers, and roses in smiling bloom. The sodden road was thronged with festive people, women of the better classes decked out in muslins and gauzes, and even those of the lower orders somehow managing to afford white dresses. Only the very poorest remained in their foul sheepskins and did not enter the church but stood at the door crossing themselves before the ikons of the Virgin.

In the afternoon the Whistlers were drawn to their windows by sounds of song. They beheld groups of peasants saunter by with music and ballads. Emma Maingay, who was then visiting Debo, remarked that the music was delightful. But were these mouzhiks singing hymns? Emma blushed: "Oh no, their words are foolish and low beyond our conception!"

"If I could speak to them!" Anna lamented. "I would teach them how they should spend the Lord's day!"

This mass of Russian serfs, Anna thought downheartedly, seemed to reflect no more than dumb beasts could. And this girl, this Emma who spoke Russian, not only failed to enlighten the natives but herself needed a firm shepherd.

Emma spent a week, wearing out Anna's scant welcome. Anna found relief in the thought that soon, soon the Maingay women would be leaving for England.

The girl's mother was really a kindly soul. For two days Mrs. Maingay drove Mrs. Whistler around the capital, showing her the best places to shop, establishments where the Englishwoman had been well served in the twelve years of her Russian stay. Anna was thankful, although as ever dubious of Mrs. Maingay's chances for heaven. She thought: "When I can speak Russian as she does I may bargain as profitably. The rogues I have to deal with here!"

Presently the Maingays were packed and ready. Debo went to stay with Emma on the Island her last day. Later Whistler crossed the Neva in an open barge to fetch his daughter; a sudden squall swept the river, soaking Whistler to the skin, and yet the trip was in vain, for the Maingays persuaded him to leave the girls together for one evening more. He was cheerful about it when he returned home alone, and Anna dared not show her ire.

At length, the hour of leave struck. The two girls wept piteously, exchanging portraits, promising to write, and vowing never to forget each other.

To Anna, what a surcease of constant irritation when the steamer chugged down the Neva bearing the Maingays away!

V

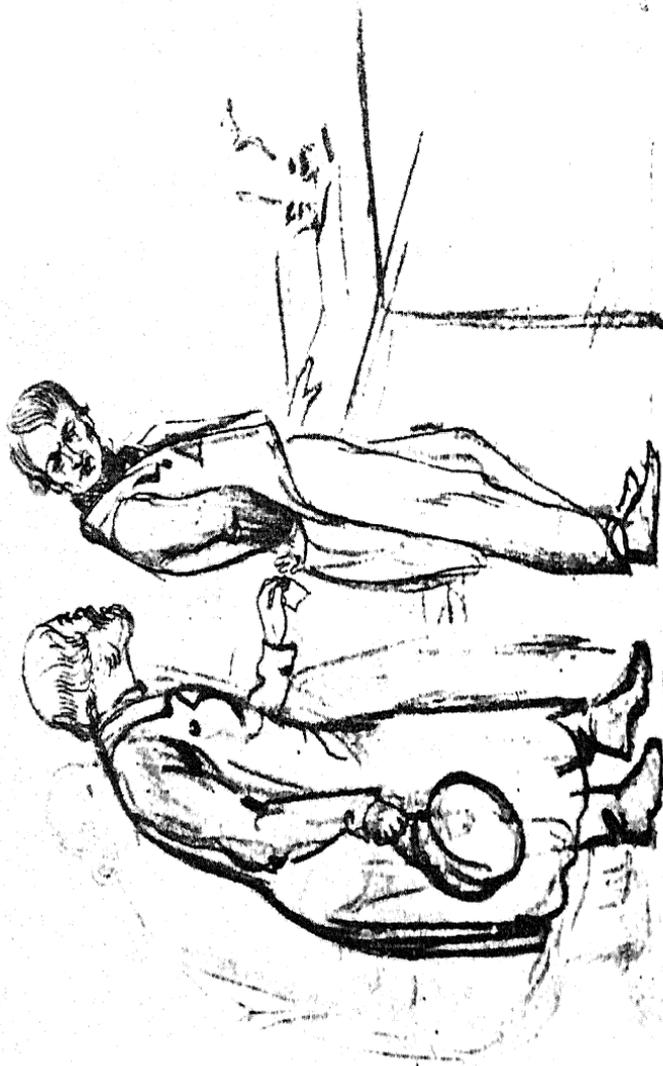
Even after the Maingays' departure, Debo continued to show little respect for Anna's instructions and injunctions. If possible, the girl became more independent. Anna was especially crestfallen at Debo's attitude toward the young Reverend Williams.

Williams was the new curate, substituting for Law who had left for the summer. Anna found the newcomer an excellent man indeed: he preached with such power and fervor; he urged, exhorted, and threatened God's wrath in a manner that struck in her all the hungering chords—but each time she suspected that Debo did not share her enthusiasm. One Sunday, as they were driving home, to Anna's vociferous praises of the new pastor, Debo spoke up sharply and said Williams was bigoted!

Debo was a problem. She was too popular. The tidings of her gay times in Russia had already reached the States, and friends wrote to Whistler there were rumors Debo was soon to be married.



"The rogues I have to deal with here!" wrote Mrs. Whistler in her diary. This lithograph by Vasily Timm, "The Apraksin Mart" (1843), shows a lady of St. Petersburg out shopping. She is besieged by the sly merchants, each trying to induce her to enter his shop. Note the lady's serf-lackey carrying her umbrella; also the boy-beggar.



From a contemporary drawing by Paul Fedotov

A RUSSIAN OFFICIAL ACCEPTS A BRIBE

Testily the Major replied that he did not know how the good people at home contrived to hear so much of his domestic affairs. "We know of no matrimonial prospect in our family," he wrote. "I trust I shall bring Debo home quite safe."

Debo was also a problem, at least to Anna, because the girl's love for music appeared to grow daily. At the Whistlers', music, Anna said, should not be devoted to worldly amusements only. Actually, sacred tunes and words were the only kind she recognized as music. She was powerless against the Whistlers' talent and tradition of the flute and the piano; they antedated her as Whistler's second wife, they were stronger than any force she could muster. Seemingly, she submitted. In reality, she waged a ceaseless, relentless war.

Williams was her new ally. Once he entered their dacha-house while Debo was at the piano. She stopped playing, and rose in a fright. Stonily he assured her that he did not oppose music, but that he preferred sacred airs. Anna was happy. Yes, she seconded, neither their good pastor nor she herself was hostile to worldly music, but surely there was such an unfortunate state of matters as too much practice mornings, and too much exhibition evenings! When, on another occasion, he asked Debo for church melodies she could not gratify him with the titles he named, though she did know such tunes as "Thy Will Be Done" and even "Thou Meet'st Me Where'er I Go." William Ropes played them on the piano, and Debo followed on the harp. Between hymns Anna lectured to all present that she detested foolish song-words set no matter to what melodious airs: "I cannot enjoy what seems in direct opposition to the warning of our Savior upon idle words."

Her darling wish, she added, was that if her James and Willie acquired any proficiency in music they might contribute to the praise of God in public worship.

Chapter Fifteen

MAJOR WHISTLER believed in education. This stay in Russia should not be taken passively. Anna, Debo and the boys must see the sights of this land. Without humbling themselves, without losing their dignity, they must see its splendors and its works, so as not to recross the ocean empty-minded and poor-tongued. Therefore he took them to the Winter Palace and the Hall of Nobles, to Tsarskoye Selo and to Peterhof, to marts and manors, and many other sites of note. And wherever the Whistlers went, the Russians seemed to know the Major, seemed to be pleased to greet him and his family.

The Winter Palace was among the first on the program. The Major learned of the week when the imperial inhabitants would be away, and a tour of the fabulous suites possible. With a proud confidence he led his brood along Nevsky Prospect to Alexander Square and into the rust-red building where twice he had been received by Tsar Nicholas. Inwardly fighting her feeling of pleasure, Anna whispered that the staircase was the grandest she had ever ascended. They tiptoed through apartments of every majestic variety, but she attempted to tell herself that she was not at all astonished by their sumptuousness; rather, she said, was she surprised at the freshness, the perfect spick-and-span state, in which everything was kept. Cleanliness, not color, impressed her. To find such neatness in this land of sloth and evil odors! From the palace windows the Whistlers looked at the Neva and farther on, at the fortress and church with its gilded spire. Great and splendid too were the other buildings in the vicinity, the palaces, the barracks, the spear-headed Admiralty in the next square of sweeping dimensions. There were, Anna remarked, no gloomy contrasts; all bespoke the prosperous reign of Emperor Nicholas!

Telling them marvels of the Hall of Nobles, the Major took his women to a concert in that famous structure. At the approaches, gendarmes fussed, directing the court equipages and the hackneys formed in line. Inside the Hall, immense chandeliers of crystal

shed brilliant light upon the fashionable crowd moving among pillars and evergreens, music was loud, and Italian singers trilled for the Empress and one of her daughters sitting out there, in their canopied and gilded box. The Whistler women caught a glimpse of the jeweled magnificence: the resplendent white dress of the Tsarina set off with feathers and diamonds; the pale blue gown of Grand Duchess Olga, flowers in her fair hair.

And yet on another day they went to the old fortress church to see the tombs of Russia's emperors. The service was over; for a ten-kopek coin slipped into his palm, the soldier in charge bowed low as he gave each of the Whistlers a flower from the fresh garlands daily brought to one of the newest coffins. The sarcophagi were covered with velvet palls; the soldier lifted the cover from Tsar Alexander's coffin as a sample of what all the others looked like, and the visitors beheld jeweled medals and other high ornaments. They marched through the crypt behind the veteran: here was the last resting place of Peter the Great; here the tomb of Empress Catherine, the amorous one. Anna was in bliss—how silent the sepulchers of Russia's mighty contrasted with the fanfare of the court! Vanity of vanities ending in this dust that returned to dust!

Away from the gloom, up to life the Whistlers proceeded. Gostiny Dvor, or the Yard of Merchants, glittering and thronged at one point of Nevsky Prospect, was a vast bazaar, an Asiatic arcade of some two hundred stores and stalls filled with every imaginable ware. Major Whistler walked gravely as the expedition's head and Colonel Bouttatz as the pilot through the throng and its bewildering language. Images, artificial flowers, toys, and various colorful trifles were on every stall, at every turn. The boys were much excited, Jimmie's spirits so lively that he drew the eyes and comment of many Russians. Even in crowds here, said Anna, such decorum prevailed that it must be surprising to see such boisterousness as her boys were displaying. Willie was rather more serious as he bargained for a harmonica and for a banner with the Russian eagle which he meant to send to a chum left behind in the States. For Jimmie, his father bought a cosmorama of the seasons, which in the evening they exhibited at home, all lit up.

And still on another occasion they accompanied the Gellibrands to a peasant fete on the estate of Count and Countess Kushelev. Serfs and their women sat at two long tables on the lawn, feasting with a happy tumult on steaming soup and meat, brown and white bread, and huge fish pies. The soup was prepared in great iron cauldrons, and the boiled beef was spooned out with rough cupped palms. As at every public gathering, beggars hovered near by, awaiting their time. A band played while beer was brought in buckets and vodka served without a drop of diluting water. Not only young and middle-aged men but also comely girls drank heartily, mothers helped one another to the fiery liquid, and even tottering or patriarchal grandsires partook of the strong stuff. But a signal was presently sounded for the mouzhiks to leave the emptied board, and the impatient beggars moved over to grab the leftovers. Strains of music called the peasants to the other side of the lordly mansion, and the Americans followed.

On the lawn a juggler performed, a Punch-and-Judy show was in full happening, and a cosmorama unfolded, while in front of



Gostiny Dvor, or the Yard of Merchants, in the 1840s-'50s. From Robert Sears, *Illustrated Description of the Russian Empire*, 1855

an artificial lake stood two very tall poles. These were not only barked but also polished and soaped; at the top of each, prizes were placed: a suit of new clothes, a belt, a hat, a pair of boots; up the slippery poles climbed the many competitors, only to come down before they could reach the top.

At length two lads succeeded. Amid shouts of praise and envy they went off with their prizes, and soon returned dressed in the hard-earned costumes. In triumph they were taken toward the low balcony where the Count and Countess stood surrounded by laughing ladies and officers. Each of the two winners knelt before the Countess to kiss her hand. Speeches were made, and the great lady bent to kiss both peasants on the brow. Showers of nuts and sugar plums fell upon the serf-children swarming near the terrace.

The Gellibrands called Anna's eye to a foreign-looking pair near the masters. These were the Scotch steward of the estate and his wife. She was dressed in a gay light silk, a lacy pocket handkerchief denoting her upper grade in Russia's scheme of things. To Anna, both seemed as if they were sharing the Count's prosperity and mightily pleased about life in this strange land.

II

Of Peterhof the Whistlers had for a long time heard as of a place of wonders. To Peterhof they went. Walking through the grounds, they admired the world-famed fountains, the streams splashing and descending over the numerous steps, the statues of heathen deities presiding over the gurgling, swirling splendor. Jimmie was fascinated by the figure of Samson tearing open a lion's jaws, from which a jet of water shot up some hundred feet high. Other gilded figures were fenced with smaller jets of water. The Whistlers were astonished whichever way they turned. In a house where Tsar Peter had dwelt the boys laughed at the incongruity of his dirty flannel nightcap, but Anna lectured: "His spirit of economy might be a lesson. The profusion of the present time!"

Of Tsarskoye Selo they had heard much and well from its partisan, Colonel Todd. From their dacha to Tsarskoye the best way

was not Gerstner's railroad but the old turnpike. The Whistlers found it to be a beautiful avenue of linden trees, with milestones like monuments marking their progress past some of the neatest villages they had seen in Russia. The gable end of a log cottage facing the road was generally carved and painted—perhaps not so much for the sense of beauty of the dwellers themselves as to gladden the eyes of the Tsar who, before Gerstner's railroad came through, had used this turnpike between the capital and the summer palace. Indeed, the Tsarina still preferred her horse-carriage to the iron steed.

The pretty villages were alive with peasants in holiday clothes; even children had new shirts or frocks on. Through the doors and windows of the cottages the Whistlers could see young maidens braiding one another's hair and tying large bows of ribbon at the braids' end. What was the occasion, what saint's day or national triumph were these folk observing? The anniversary of the Virgin's death, was the answer. Anna sneered: "I wonder what chronicler informs them."

They liked the Tsar's private town of macadamized streets kept so remarkably tidy; they liked its gardens of straight alleys and serpentine streams, its lakes with snowy swans. Jimmie and Willie stood stock-still at the sight of a Chinese bridge and Chinese men and women keeping it. As they walked through the apartments of the Catherine Palace, each suite seemed to exceed the last one seen in magnificence and originality: here was a Chinese-style suite, with not only the furniture but also the walls, ceilings, doors and panels made of Chinese wood and many framed by the finest Chinese porcelain; and here was another string of rooms with inlaid floors of mother-of-pearl in flowers, as polished as a looking glass. Again, as in the Winter Palace, it was the utter neatness, the pristine freshness of every little stick and stone, that amazed Anna. She remarked approvingly the paths of cloth arrowing across the chambers to preserve the polish of the floors. She commended the foresight that had stationed servants at the entrance to relieve gentlemen of their surtouts on coming into the palace, and tried to down her worry that Maxwell, who was

with them and who yet suffered from vestiges of his illness, might take a chill in these damp galleries.

Her worry receded before the wonder of the room once occupied by Alexander I. The conqueror of Napoleon had left this place one day in 1825, never to return, and it remained untouched to the Whistlers' day: the camp bed behind the screen, the simple chairs hung over with fine damask napkins. There were paintings on the walls, and before these Jimmie stopped. He would have liked to stay on and examine them closely and critically and find out who the painters were, but Todd was expecting his guests, and they must be on their way. Through the splendid gardens, past the glass conservatories of exotic plants, they walked toward the Colonel's house, and Anna asked: "Jimmie, would you wish to be a grand duke to have these for playgrounds?"

But Jimmie shook his head. No, he said, there could be no freedom with a footman at one's heels!

A good answer, felt Anna. Yet she was pleased despite herself when Todd's chasseur took his place behind their equipage, and, as they drove across the picture-book town, soldiers saluted their group and humble townsmen doffed their hats with speed, precision and the same neatness which stamped Tsarskoye.

Her pleasure changed to annoyance when Anna discovered that the Colonel deemed it necessary to schedule a dinner party for the Whistlers. The annoyance mounted when she met the other guests. One was a Russian general who spoke English but did not say much. A captain of the chevalier-guards was on the other hand all vivacity and elegance, but he spoke French and sat next to Debo. Todd spoke French, and translated every sentence of his into the English. Anna found this too ridiculous. At last she could restrain herself no longer; firmly she said to him: "I understand French even though I lack confidence to speak it."

The party threatened to turn into a complete disaster when Todd proposed the Emperor's health in champagne. Until then, on every occasion that had presented itself, Anna had invariably refused to join in toasts. But this would be declining to honor Russia's ruler and her husband's employer. It might be misconstrued as disrespect, as *lèse majesté*. For Whistler's sake, she said to herself as she

put a glass to her lips and went through the motion of drinking the foul stuff.

From their little side table Jimmie and Willie watched their mother with incredulity. Then, encouraged by the unusual sight, they presented their glasses to be filled. It was all done before Anna could halt them. They cried out:

"Santé à l'Empereur!"

The Captain was delighted. He clapped his hands, and spoke his swift French to them, and all at the table laughed in a pleased way, calling out to the boys:

"Bons sujets!"

Good subjects of the Tsar her little boys were called! Her heart bled, yet what could she do or say? Snared, trapped!

But Colonel Todd, the expansive Kentuckian, was not through yet. His guests must see the celebrated halls of Pavlovsk, to hear those sweet bands, to mingle with the crowds. In vain Anna protested. She was swept into a carriage with the others.

Her nagging voice was stilled by the rustle of the enormous evergreens, by the whole fairy scene of Pavlovsk. The seven o'clock train from the capital had filled the garden alleys with a milling throng, had peopled the green benches with laughing lovers. Herman's, the famous German orchestra, alternated with a fine military band. Debo liked the German tunes, while Jimmie tapped his foot whenever martial airs sounded. Willie was an all-embracing soul: he danced or marched as either band played. The pavilion was brilliant with lamps; it beckoned to linger and dance, but Anna's will at last prevailed. They stayed but a half-hour. A small victory, yet she won it against tremendous odds.

They had a full moon to light their return journey to the Peterhof road. At cottage doors, groups of peasants were bringing to a close the holiday evening by dancing or singing their peculiar glees.

A weird, hypnotic land!

Jimmie was beginning to feel its spell. He was at home amid these gaudy festivals and the never-ending parades of the Tsar's strait-jacketed troops. He loved the sound of military brasses and

noble names and superior titles; he relished the way the Russian menials and vendors addressed him Your High Birth.

Must he ever return to America? Was the beautiful Mrs. Bodisco not right? Perhaps this was the only worthwhile country to live in—this glittering, sumptuous, servile Russia of the Tsar. Perhaps real freedom could be had only with a footman at one's heels!

Chapter Sixteen

RAIN came powerfully, thunder would wake them in the night, and oppressive heat would follow. And then—rain again. Away from home, on a fortnight's tour of inspection, Whistler shivered in the rains, although he had his fur coat and Alexander to take care of him. He suffered from homesickness, and thought that perhaps he should not indulge himself by staying home so much—each time the longer he stayed the sharper was the pain of parting.

Anna missed Whistler. Her afternoons seemed empty when she knew that in the evening there would be no Whistler to come from town. Debo was amusing her by reading *Conquest of Mexico*, the new work by Prescott, that half-blind genius of Boston; it had come out the previous December and just reached Russia. Anna tolerated it even though it read, she said, quite like romance.

William Maingay was a familiar figure these weeks; he called on the excuse of bringing letters from his sister Emma but stayed for teas and dinners and not too ably played duets with Debo. Other British and Americans came, bringing court gossip, chiefly the news of the grave illness of Grand Duchess Alexandra, the bride of a few months. Anna deplored that the Prince of Hesse drank champagne while his young wife was so ill. An English governess was by the side of the Tsar's daughter, and doing the utmost to save her soul, but who would wake the Prince's conscience?

The peasant woman with her little Andrea somehow found the way to the summer place of the benevolent Americans, but Anna decided that after all it was wrong to encourage begging, that giving alms was a disservice to the peasant's soul. She set the woman scrubbing the floors of the Whistler dacha-house.

That day a band of wandering jugglers appeared in the yard, and as their wheezy hurdy-gurdy struck up a tune, Andrea ran to Anna on tiptoe, fingers in mouth, looking half-timid yet half-assured that this fine lady's heart had experienced no change to-

ward him. And again Anna melted, these full black eyes speaking to her so much more intelligibly than his Russian tongue could. Oh, her own precious Kirkie! . . . She opened the door for the boy to see the jugglers, and threw a few kopeks to the bowing leader.



The Hurdy-Gurdy of the 1830s-'40s
From a contemporary Russian drawing

II

The year's middle months marched through an arch of rainbows. July followed in the steps of June: rains fell in loud showers with a savage determination, but between times the Russian sun shone gloriously upon the lush greenery and wet roads. It was haymaking time, and many wild flowers were already gone under the scythe, yet, as the Whistlers walked across the meadows, they found enough of the delicate blue forget-me-nots they liked so well. Willie, as ever more tractable than Jimmie, helped Anna to gather bouquets.

The Fourth of July was a dusty day. To celebrate America's independence Anna gave the boys a holiday from their studies. The road to Peterhof had a festive air, but for a Russian reason: the Tsar had returned from abroad; he was this day scheduled to accompany some troops and cadets to their summer camps. In the

expectation of the Emperor, peasants watered the dusty macadam road, using small buckets filled with mud from ditches.

Soon detachments of cadets marched by. These military students were very young, many of them not more than ten or twelve years old, yet they marched like regular soldiers. The people of the dachas watched them go by, and waited for a glimpse of the Tsar, but he was not in the procession. At last, word came that Nicholas had ridden by the ranks' side up to a certain point, and had then turned back.

An encampment of the cadets was two estates off, and the Whistler boys joined with their Russian chums to pay a visit. They found the cadets resting; tea and things were being served to them by the dacha-gentry. An officer in command noticed the good-looking Jimmie and asked him, first in Russian, then in French, to what regiment he belonged.

"None here," Jimmie answered regretfully. "I must wait to get again to my own country."

The boys came back with their high-mettled chatter, and Anna thought that she was in luck, that the Fourth of July had proved as exciting a day for her sons in Russia as it had no doubt been to their cousins in Stonington. But all those Russian boy-soldiers she had seen that day marching in the heat and dust—"Poor little fellows!"

A rain burst out, and she thought of them in their tents out there in the field, drenched and miserable; she suffered for them in the night as she listened to the drumlike beat of the rain.

III

The next morning the sun shone again. Cloaked and bonneted, Anna walked about, admiring the clean-washed flowers, and frowningly thinking of Jimmie.

While her younger one, her Willie, was agreeable to reason and lesson, Jem was at times so mulish, so cross-grained. For her younger son she had but one dull uniform name—Willie—as placid and monotonous as himself. But for the changeable, unpredictable elder boy there was a variety of names: James, Jem,

Jemie, Jimmie. It depended on her mood and his actions, and the endless dovetailings or conflicts of the two. On the whole, even when in a sweet mood, James was a trial to his mother's patience. He was so eager in pursuit of all that interested him: "He hinders me not a little by his questions." She had to be firm with him.

In Whistler's absence she moved Jimmie from the nursery to her room to keep him from sitting up late at night reading the life of Charles XII. She had discovered his hobby when one morning at breakfast he began to tell anecdotes from the book. At the age of seven the Swedish king had ridden a horse, and here he, James, was nearly ten but owned no mount yet. "He rather upbraided me," recalled Anna fondly, yet perturbed. On a trip to Tsarskoye and its armory Jimmie was sad when he beheld swords taken from noble Swedes on the battlefields where Tsar Peter had defeated King Charles. He stared at the rich hilts set in pearls and precious stones. "Oh! I'd rather have one of these than all the other things! How beautiful they are!" So that they might not forget their God and their English, Anna made both boys read from holy texts to her directly after breakfast, but to lessen the torrent of Jimmie's questions she made a change in the program: she heard Willie first while Jimmie had to practice on the piano for a half-hour before his turn came. But as he played, and as he read the holy texts, the deeds of the mad Swedish king and of his generals filled the boy's mind.

His interest in Sweden and its history had first stemmed from his enthusiasm for the Swedish tutor. Indeed for a time Sweden seemed a better land than even this glittering, flattering Russia. The King's opponent and undoer, Tsar Peter, did not in Jimmie's eyes deserve the appellation of the Great. Once, at Peterhof, the Whistlers stopped before some pictures of birds painted by Peter. Anna was impressed with the imperial authorship, but Jimmie laughed scornfully. Poor paintings, he declared. This history, this book in which he was delighting so, did not think much of Peter and his Russians, and much of the comment the boy found true even for the Russia of his observation: "It's just so, mother, isn't it? They will not kill or eat a pigeon yet!"

Only drawing came before reading or parades. Only pictures

meant more than either Sweden or Russia, either King Charles or Tsar Peter. Much of his time he spent in drawing, and his pen-and-ink sketches, each in a frame of his own design, were liked by the family and some were sent to the innumerable kin in America. Rare was her visit to St. Petersburg when Anna did not call at the Palette de Raphael, the store where she bought drawing paper and other supplies for her Jem.

Yet, on his tenth birthday, it was not a drawing but a note that Jimmie placed under each breakfast plate:

“To my mother, July 10, 1844.

“They tell us of an Indian tree
Which howsoe'er the sun and sky
May tempt its boughs to wander free
And shoot and blossom, wide and high
Far better loves to bend its arms
Downwards again, to that dear earth
From which the life that fills and warms
Its grateful being, first had birth.

“ 'Tis thus, though woo'd by flattering friends
And fed with fame (if fame it be),
This heart, my own dear mother, bends
With love's true instinct back to thee.”

The poem was not Jimmie's own, to be sure, yet of his own selection. Anna wept as she kissed him: “Oh God, hear my prayer that this holy feeling, this filial love may never desert him!”

IV

Whistler came home in time for Jimmie's birthday. Right royally sunburned despite the rains, a light in his eye, he sat surrounded by the family, telling them amid awe: “Sailing through the bogs—not walking or riding! Knee-deep! What could I have done without my waterproof boots! Sometimes on horseback seventeen hours at a sitting! No wonder my joints are unhinged!”

Even before he had a chance to dry and rest himself, he grasped the flute which Harrison had just brought him from London.

Trying it out, he liked it instantly: almost as good as the cherished one which had been stolen the previous Christmas! Soon honey-toned duets resounded through the house, Debo on the piano, Whistler on the new flute. All were amused to see at bedtime with what care he wiped the instrument, with what precision he put it away in its case, giving it to Anna's keeping.

Now that the Major was home, and before Kleinmichel and his own sense of duty would once more call him jogging up and down the line, he used his free time to find a town house for the winter. In the second half of July, he and Anna rested their choice on Ritter Dom, the English Quay, with its ten-room flat at nine hundred rubles per annum, which was only one-half the rent at Galernaya.

Whistler, however, was not entirely satisfied: here, as in all Russian houses, he found everything arranged more for display than convenience. He contrasted the gilded cornices and painted ceilings with the rough and neglected corners. Anna was of the same mind: "Ah, how comfortable the snug homes of America and England!" But she could not help adding: "Still, in Russia, servants are so respectful and willing!"

In this house she noted certain advantages perhaps unseen by the Major. The house was within a five-minute walk of the English church. Their flat was on the third floor with a balcony whence an excellent view of the Neva presented itself. In navigation time they would see passengers and freight unload at the Quay, and so would know better than in Galernaya when to expect letters from the States and England. Too, one could see the bridge leading to the English cemetery; Anna and Alicia would be able to observe funeral cortèges cross the bridge.

V

It was in July, on a Sunday, that Alicia arrived. The captain of the *Mermaid* should have had better piety than anchor on the Lord's day, but now that the ship was here, and Alicia tremulously stepping down the plank, it could not be helped. Anna rode from the church to the landing. Through the favor shown by cus-

toms officers to William Ropes, the usual delays were eliminated and Alicia was soon in Anna's carriage, the sisters embracing and weeping.

From Brother Mac that summer there were letters, but puzzlingly infrequent: to three letters of the Major's, Mac replied with but one. Sometimes Mac did not even mention Anna's name, and, hurt, she would flimsily rationalize that the letter had been hurriedly written, that Mac had not time to be either more detailed or affectionate.

George, however, wrote often. His health in the South Seas was improved, even though he and his fellows had lost all their fresh provisions soon after sailing from New York and had lived upon nothing but salt pork and beef and rice for one hundred and forty days.

His father and Anna did not know that George was developing into an epicure. In the Sandwich Islands the youth ate and liked baked dog. Quite a choice article of food, that. He found that a dog, carefully fed and fattened, when served was much cleaner and tastier than a young pig.

As for their own food, gradually Anna improved the Whistlers' table, so that in time their commons in Russia were neither short nor monotonous. They would not insult their stomachs with too many Slav concoctions, they would have their own country's dishes even in this land.

The excellent cook was willing to learn all that Anna and Debo could teach her. The Finn baked hot rolls in the best American style, and her mincemeat would be approved by any Boston or New York palate. The eggs were done in the Yankee manner, and so was coffee. The Whistlers kept a cow of their own, and had home-churned butter.

From the hotbeds of their Russian landlord came an occasional gift of squash, great rarity in this country. Anna trained the fishmonger, who stopped at her door regularly, to bring fresh salmon, and she had it cooked and served in the American style, with green peas, but adding a native touch to the day's menu: tumblers of iced mead, a delicious drink, much praised by the Americans who dined at her board. In after months, later in the

summer, watermelons from Astrakhan surprised her with their nectareous flavor; these she served not in the tepid Russian way but after keeping them a spell in the icehouse.

The good cheer of her board quickly found its votaries and even sycophants. Thus, the Whistlers' plum cake was thought so delectable in this land of few cakes that Colonel Melnikov gladly responded to an invitation and stayed with the Whistlers two days.

VI

Some of their visitors used the excuse of the Whistlers' good table for the purpose of what Anna took to be an insidious attack on her sabbatarianism.

One afternoon, just as they were seating themselves to a tea, a carriage drove up, and an acquaintance of theirs, a snow-haired Scotsman named William Miller alighted, respectfully escorting a somber-looking stranger. Anna was delighted, and at the same time sorry that Whistler was away, for the stranger proved to be no less a celebrity than Sir William Allen himself. They had heard of this outstanding artist. The Scot had recently come to Russia to paint the most dramatic feats of Peter the Great.

Noting the tea things, Miller turned to congratulate Sir William: "Just in the nick of time for Mrs. Whistler's excellent home-made bread and fresh butter!" He endorsed the plum cakes: "Made at home and so like Scotch buns!" Anna smiled in her thin-lipped way, and Miller, encouraged, went on: "Mrs. Whistler has visited Edinburgh and is partial to the Scotch."

But he must impress this pious stick of a woman with the honor he was bestowing upon her household by bringing this great man. So he launched into a description of Sir William's canvas showing Peter the Great teaching the mouzhiks to build ships.

At this point the most interested listener was Jimmie. His eyes shone. His slim hands fidgeted. This would not escape the attention of the distinguished guest. A question, another—and the

boy's love for the art of painting was discovered. Sir William must see Jimmie's attempts.

He looked at the sketches long and slowly, but would not say much. Only after the boys had said good night and left the room, he said: "Your little boy has uncommon genius, but do not urge him beyond his inclination."

Anna played the role of a sensible parent: "His gift is being cultivated as an amusement only. I am obliged to interfere with it, or his application would confine him more than we approve."

In the meantime Miller riveted his stare on the person he had really come to see: the stepdaughter of the handsome face and musical talent, Miss Debo. He was like a soft-eyed dog at the feet of his owner. There was an interruption in the table talk as a note was brought by a servant from the Ropeses, requiring Debo's answer. She excused herself, and rose. Fear gripped him that she might not return; he protested: "You should make them understand, Miss Whistler, you attend to no business after dinner."

But she came back, and he felt better.

Later in the evening, while Debo played for Sir William, Miller in a sly low voice said to Anna: "Do you know why I have come today? It is that I may not offend you by intruding on Sunday. Sometimes I have such a desire to see you all—so very much that I cannot overcome it even on Sunday!"

"You must be sure," replied Anna, "that I welcome my husband's friends every day but upon the Sabbath. On the Sabbath I consider myself *engaged*."

He laughed: "What is to become of poor bachelors then?"

She disregarded the joke, for it was in bad taste, almost impious. He grew serious:

"I respect your views, Madam, for in Scotland we are brought up to be very strict about the observance of the Sabbath. But the Major is not so particular as you are. Perhaps sometimes when he is at home you will excuse my coming from town to walk with him?"

It was her turn to laugh, triumphantly, as she said: "I know my husband would scold me for such inhospitable treatment of his

friends. Yet I must confess I miss him from my Sunday readings with our children."

Miller was making no headway. This woman was too much for him. A stupid evening! It was getting late, and he must take Sir William back to town.

But before he went he would venture his last sally: would Mrs. Whistler promise that one day soon she would permit him to take Miss Debo and herself for a ride in his phaeton?

Failure again, as the puritan woman assured him that their own horses and calash had to be used, that they could not afford to exercise other people's steeds: "We are obliged to use the Major's horses to keep them in order against his return."

Well she knew (she scornfully smiled to herself) how the busybodies among the English on this road would talk were she to accept Miller's desperate offer—were Debo and she to be seen in his company riding around while Whistler was away.

VII

A few versts up the Peterhof road there glistened the domes and flitted the black monkish silhouettes of St. Sergei's. The monastery held for her the sickly fascination of a cobra. As she visited it, she was spellbound yet repelled beyond measure. In the richly gilded little chapel the screen before the Holy of Holies was florid with pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and various saints, numerous tapers twinkling before each image. Near the door a priest sat at a table heaped high with tapers and kopeks—he was selling candles to the worshipers.

Incense floated thickly; men and women, rich and poor alike, stood or knelt, crossing themselves incessantly. At times they uniformly prostrated themselves on the floor, touching it with their foreheads. There was not much difference to Anna's mind and eye between this and the Roman service. Prayers were said in a tongue unknown to the faithful, and too rapidly—except when these people asked God to bless the imperial family. The brocaded vestments were much like those in the Romish church. But one detail seemed peculiarly different: the long black robes of these

grand procession began, the priests magnificent in chasubles of light-blue velvet and silver, the bishops' miters glittering with diamonds and pearls and other stones of price. Everywhere wax tapers glinted and flickered, and as the crowd fell to their knees the sweetish drugging incense was showered upon the heads and backs. Anna decided there could be no true religious feeling in these clergy, nor was there anything in the worshipers but awe before the overdressed priests. One might think that not God and Christ but these bishops were the worshipers' deities. "Oh," she said to Whistler, "if we could collect such a multitude to join in our simple and pure form of worship, to hear the word of truth! Happy would it be for them!"

When they came home, Debo and Alicia had not yet returned. At last the aunt and niece appeared—with the exciting news that their carriage had been passed by the Tsar himself. Anna was chagrined: "I always miss the sight!"

With many sighs she heard that the Tsar had entered the church and had asked for a special prayer on behalf of his daughter Alexandra, the consumptive Duchess in childbirth throes; that he had knelt before the altar, and his tears had flowed, and everyone around him had been moved to behold the great man so humbled.

VIII

This world was but a fleeting show: the tubercular Duchess died in the last stage of pregnancy, herself hardly more than a child, only nineteen.

The entire nation was to mourn the Tsar's daughter: all places of amusement were to be closed for six weeks. "What a pity," Anna said, "that they should ever be opened. If they are improper now, they are always dangerous." Everywhere prayers were offered for the soul of the Duchess, and Anna cried out: "Oh when will these errors be done away with in the Greek church?" Did these Russians not know that there was no repentance in the grave? That through eternity the soul must be as it left this world?

Of such matters she spoke best to those who understood her closest—the lady-invalids of the Factory. She sought them out with her presents of calf's foot jelly and Ainsley ginger cakes. On hot days she brought roses from her garden, and gently fanned now one bedridden one, now another, and bathed an invalid's hands in cologne and pressed small lumps of ice to her cracked lips and read from the Bible. Once, from her fevered pillow, a dying Englishwoman breathed to Anna: "God brought you here . . . for He had work for you to do . . ."

Yes, it was God who had brought Anna to Russia, to this tarnished land of evil blasphemy, of idolatry, of terrible ignorance, this country that most appallingly lacked the knowledge that was in Christ Jesus our Lord. The call to Major Whistler to build a railroad for the Tsar was but a disguised and loftier call to Anna—a mission which she must faithfully discharge!

IX

Distributing tracts, Anna decided, was the only effective channel for bringing light into this land, into this inflexible spectral crazy quilt called Russia.

In the early years of the previous reign—that of Alexander I—the English missionaries of the Bible Society had been active and unhindered, but before he died Alexander had changed his policy, and his brother Nicholas proved even a greater upholder of Greek Orthodoxy. Bibles that deviated from the patterns laid down by his own church were no longer allowed to be printed or distributed. It was forbidden to speak to the poor about any other faith than the Orthodox. But, lamented Anna, the poor seldom heard good sermons in their churches, and the service was in ancient Slavonian, which was not understood by the people. They could be awakened only by truths from the tracts. The Tsar should be brought to his senses. Once, on an excursion to a Tsarskoye Selo palace, she stood as if in a trance before some stuffed horses—gifts to the Romanovs from the sultans and shahs—the equestrian exhibits where saddles, stirrups and scabbards gleamed with many gems. She should be laughed at in the court

of earthly princes, she at last remarked with heat, if she expressed a certain wish. And what might it be? That the value of these stones, instead of being shut up in glass cases to excite envy and amazement, be transferred to the missionary fund and its tracts!

Tracts, tracts! She loudly praised the American chapel of St. Petersburg for its missionary fund-raising and scorned the English church on the Quay where such extramural activities were frowned upon by the Factory leaders. She refused to understand the Factory's political prudence, the simple fact that these English did not wish to incur the Tsar's displeasure. Tracts, tracts, distribute tracts, O brethren!

Whistler might be worried, might secretly fear that missionary activities of his wife would sooner or later come to the Tsar's knowledge. The Americans would surely lose their jobs and be packed off to the States at once. But there was no stopping Anna. A letter was read to her describing the godly labors of a German landowner in the Russian provinces—he, too, was distributing tracts, and it was moving to hear that mouzhiks walked versts to his mansion to secure the brochures. Anna redoubled her efforts, and impressed the two boys into the work.

On Sundays especially, if they noticed a knot of young Russian men playing or lolling on the grass, she would point the direction, and like an able commander of the Lord's legion she would watch Jimmie or Willie pitch a tract to the idlers. She said that each booklet was picked up as a prize, that the young men seemed to thank her and the boys as if from their hearts. In connection with the railroad work, hard-ridden couriers came and went, and some of them rested a half-hour or more while waiting in the Whistlers' vestibule for the engineer's answer or signature. Anna utilized the opportunity: on a window sill in the vestibule she placed tracts.

A most satisfactory manner of distribution was to rush to the road at the first sound of martial music. As the troops approached, she would signal to the officer in charge. He would halt the march, and patiently listen to her as she, through her sons, begged his permission to hand a tract to each of his men. The officers as a

rule were too polite to refuse, and thus thousands of booklets were passed around.

Mrs. Gellibrand said she had been handing out God's word to troops for three years. Soldiers crowded to the gate of her dacha on the Peterhof road, and once in a rush some of them were pushed into a ditch. Mrs. Gellibrand was alarmed. She dreaded that such disorder might result in the officers' displeasure and, eventually, in prohibition of her work. But happen what may, consider the many edifying leaflets and tracts already spread!

"The Word is now abroad in this land!" Anna rejoiced. "May it produce fruit!"

Neither she nor Mrs. Gellibrand knew enough about Russian serfs and soldiers to realize that they prized any bit of paper, printed or blank no matter, to hold their tobacco. Some might read it, true, but most were illiterate, and practically all used it as cigarette paper. The tracts were also good as stuffing in their boots, fine protection against mud or frost.



Russians Before an Ikon. From Sears, *Illustrated Description of the Russian Empire*

Chapter Seventeen

As THE months of navigation blended into one another, steamers brought additional Americans, a few to settle under the mighty tower of Whistler's name and station, more as curious tourists or the Major's long-lost friends who insisted on being found. A certain Mr. Parker and a more familiar Colonel Thayer had to be dined and taken to the railroad works and the Cronstadt forts. A Mr. Robertson offered no letters of introduction but claimed graduation from West Point as his entry. This one came so early that the Whistlers had to invite him to breakfast. Their house was becoming a caravansary. The expense and bother—yet the celebrity of it!

Families arrived to join sundry Yanks at Alexandrovsky, and Anna made a point of welcoming these women and children. Often she was proud of their neat and bright appearance. She felt a responsibility before both nations, for it was thanks to her husband's work that the American colony was thus expanding. She embraced and kissed the newcomers and was pleased when they did not shy at her effusiveness.

A sister of William and Joseph Ropes, a girl of eighteen, was expected from Boston, but word came from Cronstadt of her detention at the port. A signature was lacking on her passport, and the Russian officials were only too glad to make a fuss about it. The sweet, scared Martha Ropes was obliged to stay on board the steamer, reading a book dejectedly and absently, while stevedores unloaded American cotton. She would look up in startled disgust when fleas, brought from the hold with the bales, hopped across the page. Then, tears welling up in her pretty eyes, Martha was marched by a convoy from one Cronstadt office to another, until the Governor claimed and calmed her. She was cheerful and even laughing with her captors after that, especially when among the latter there appeared not the loutish soldiers alone but also handsome officers who spoke French and English.

Meantime her brothers in the capital and Colonel Todd at

Tsarskoye were tugging at the necessary strings, and presently gained an order to forgive the lack of signature. The Ropeses, the Gellibrands, and the Whistlers were in town to meet the new arrival. Anna was touched to see the girl so very fair and youthful; she listened to Martha's twang of New England and with her own sharp awareness of the past remembered: "This day a year ago we left Boston. . . ."

Evenings closed earlier, and the dacha-house required candles. The downpours were summery no longer, but with a threat of autumn to their mists. A raw, cloudy morning would settle into rain. If a day was fair, and the sun set against a crimson sky, the evening air was none the less chilly. A curtain of vapor hung over the fields and woods, making them look as if covered with hoarfrost. Returning from Alexandrovsky, Jimmie would not bundle up while he bravely chattered in Russian with the coachman, but Willie, buttoning up his English greatcoat to the throat, snuggled into the folds of Anna's good gray cloak.

On the railroad, despite the venality, despite the skullduggery, work was forging on faster, faster. Much had to be finished before frosts began. Whistler was needed at all points at once. In the middle of August he left for Moscow for another fortnight of inspection; Debo and the boys went seven versts with him to meet his traveling equipage. The road was again crowded with soldiers, for the summer camps were being broken up; one day as many as forty thousand troops stomped past the Whistlers' dacha. Anna was alone and sad. Days dragged on in a forlorn chain; she wondered where her husband might be this moment, until, one morning, Nurse Mary rushed in: "Oh, ma'am, be happy! Mr. Whistler has come!"

How delighted Anna was to kiss his bronzed cheek, to cheer his heart with her all-is-well news, to hear that he, too, had been quite well, even though he had managed to spend in bed but one single night in the two weeks of journey. One day, he said, he had walked across forty-seven bogs! But what a solid, fine railroad this would be when it was finished! One of the best in Europe, surely. His left hand dismissed the coachman with the jaded horses as his right, fork-armed, cheerfully managed the

great muskmelon which Anna had fetched out of the icehouse. Why, not only in Europe—many an American railroad line might well be envious!

II

In the second half of September they ended their summer. Six wagons of goods and chattels departed for the new home on the English Quay, and the family calash waited at the door for their persons. As a parting gift, the good landlord Drury sent to the Whistlers from his greenhouse stringbeans to salt for the winter, also grapes and a bunch of dahlias. Willie and a neighboring boy embraced tenderly in the Russian manner.

In the town house, work people were settling the Whistlers' furniture. The filthy men! Anne shuddered every time their dirty robes swept past her, and she stepped back from their sheepskins as if from contagion. Alicia was beside herself at the mere sight of their long hair and matted beards. She said the high odor of these men stifled her, and at every chance of privacy she gingerly fingered her clothes for fleas.

The William Ropeses lived under the same roof, a brief matter of crossing the staircase from the Whistlers' front door. Anna loved to step from the confusion of her lodgings into the apple order of the Ropeses' rooms.

At length everything was ready. Their drawing room was carpeted and curtained after the English mode. As grates were used in most houses of the Factory, there were a number of grates in this flat too. Whistler was settled in his most comfortable chancery, and Anna in her snug room, while the rest of the family were quite satisfied with theirs. Outside the air was pert and nippy. Fall was in translucent possession of the brown earth and sere leaves. Winter would not be long in coming—the family's second Russian winter. Soon double windows would be put in, with cotton and salt between the frames, while doors would be lined with felt. Soon the last pyroscaph would steam down the Neva, and the last seaboat would lift her anchor at Cronstadt.

The last steamer! Leaving the Tsar's land for good, Maxwell

remarked that there could be no sadder words for a foreigner remaining to winter in Russia. The last boat: so many men and women would come to the pier on that day to look in envy upon the few escaping before the gates of the Baltic were locked in ice!

The Whistler women hastened to Gostiny Dvor to buy for their loved ones in America such Christmas gifts as long-haired Siberian furs and far-famed Moscow silks and pliable Kazan shoes. Along with the gifts Anna sent letters which read like copper-plate sermons: "Our family is a scattered one upon this earth, but love to Jesus can unite our hearts."

III

Throughout the summer Kleinmichel had sent his aides-de-camp to make the impatient query: "How are the works faring? What are the engineers doing?"

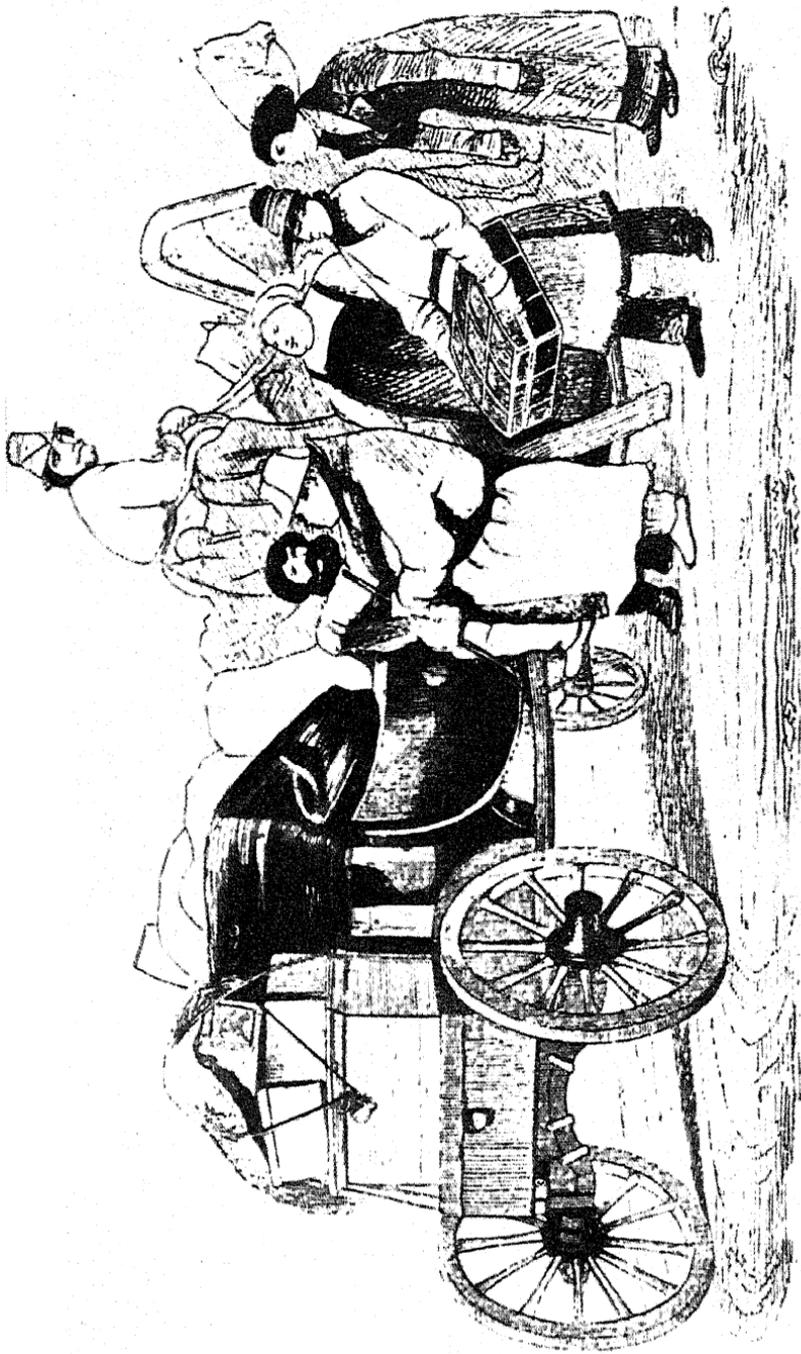
Late in September he came in person. Whistler accompanied him. When it was over, the whole tour seemed to the American a highly ridiculous performance.

Whistler had expected the usual parade of military inspection, yet had supposed that the nature of this particular service—this pioneering, digging, and building a railroad—would soften some of the right angles of Prussian tactics. But it was not to be so.

Just like a war it was, and humorously Whistler looked for Napoleonic hordes. He fancied himself, he said later, flying about the field in the staff of the late Fieldmarshal Kutuzov in the very thick of the enemy. All cuts and embankments assumed the shapes of fortifications. All was hurry and bustle. At every turn and bend they were met by small parties of cavalry. Couriers came and went in many directions with much glitter of helmet and clatter of hoof, with waving of plume and rattle of spur and saber.

What the Russians of Count Kleinmichel called their march-route had been prepared beforehand. They were to be at such and such place by this and that hour, and then at another by another, and all was carried out with utmost precision and rapidity.

It rained most of the time, and the corduroy roads were in a



By Alexander Aglin (drawn in 1844)

RUSSIANS MOVING



By Alexander Aghin (drawn in 1844)

RUSSIANS DANCING

horrible state, but no matter: men and officers were in full uniform, and the whole route was made in true time. The waterlogged carriages rolled with a heavy thumping rhythm, and many a horse was left to die by the roadside.

Wherever the party halted to inspect the works, the paths were swept or sanded. Small evergreens had been planted on each side of the walks prepared for the Count. Men stood at attention in the rain and mud, a-tremble as the awful Kleinmichel rode by. For there was no telling what trifling thing might arouse his rage, what men might be ordered to start on a long trek to Siberia.

But the earthwork was found to be faring well. With a sole exception, the job was pronounced by the Count as quite satisfactory.

The Count crowed with pleasure. But not Whistler. Sadly the American reflected: "With our plain republican notions such things as these would rightly mortify a man of common sense."

IV

The sole exception to Kleinmichel's pleasure was the lag he found in the Northern half of the line. He rebuked the contractor who had undertaken to supply twenty thousand serfs but had in fact brought no more than ten thousand, among whom many were mere children.

A few of the earthwork-contractors came from among the nobility. Most, however, were of the merchant class. They made big money, and spent it lavishly. One, called Ivan Kuzmich, was a tall handsome man who talked in a sonorous way. It was more than glib talk—it was beautiful talk. Even the coquetry of technical terms, which in childish delight he allowed himself, did not mar it. Ivan Kuzmich was new to the contractor's calling. The figures he had stipulated proved to be too low, and, despite all his trickery in the reducing of men's numbers and thieving of the crews' wages, he died a poor man. With a great satisfaction his compatriots said of Ivan: "Didn't guess."

Extraordinary people, these Russians.

Whistler looked at them in much puzzlement, then lowered

his busy eyes to the blueprints and other papers. He reviewed the season that had just ended:

Five months—one hundred and twenty-five working days—thirty thousand diggers—five thousand sick and deserters. The men dug up sixty-four million cubic yards of earth, removing one-quarter of that amount. The cost was low: a mere thirty-three cents per day per man if you counted in American money. Of course the men, being bonded serfs and having a hierarchy of brass-faced foremen, contractors and officials on their backs, received for their own use but a fraction of this pittance.

Labor was certainly cheap in Russia. Whistler saw an estimate for a small railroad somewhere in the interior for a rather temporary purpose. It was stated in the plans that the earthwork would cost nothing as the parties *owned* their labor. And another memory came: a few years before the St. Petersburg-Moscow railroad was decided upon and Whistler was invited to build it, a German engineer had proposed for Russia steamless railroads on which not locomotives but serfs were to pull small trains. For, the German had argued, man power in the Tsar's domains was cheaper than wood or coal.

Whistler was depressed. He was tired with all the tiredness of the thousands of serfs who had slaved and sickened on his railroad this past summer.

In deep thought he hung his head, but soon lifted it.

For he had every reason to believe that the railroad would be completed in four years, by 1848. He must complete it. And he would leave the day it was finished. He said to himself and to others, his lips tightly drawn over his teeth:

"Nothing can detain me here longer."

Chapter Eighteen

ON A cold night a reddish-yellow glow would light the dark sky. A fire? No, a ball in a grandee's palace.

A squadron of dragoons halt a crowd of spectators pressing to see the great or beautiful guests as they are brought by the endless line of four-horse turnouts. Their footmen follow the nobles into the vestibule, help them out of the priceless furs, then pile up the pelisses in the numerous dark corners and corridors near by. Later on, as the ball progresses, the lackeys will become drowsy and will drop off into sleep on their masters' soft fur coats. Since the lackeys are infested with lice and fleas, they will communicate some of their vermin to the perfumed masters.

Scratching from insect bites, sneezing and sniffing from their perpetual colds, the guests proceed into the inner chambers. They walk up the dreamlike staircase of Carrara marble, lined with the host's lackeys in resplendent liveries and powdered periwigs. They walk under fretwork and sculptured ceilings, upon tessellated floors, amid furniture ornamented in ormolu, mother-of-pearl, and other costliness. There are alcoves filled with fountains and palms, with statuary and fine-spun hangings; a tearoom delicately scented with jasmin and other Chinese aromas, where Negroes in Moorish costumes serve the brew; a picture gallery of landscapes and ancestors; a conservatory of unheard-of plants; and, busiest and gayest of all, the ballroom and the cardroom. Somewhere in this maze of riches, near a wall of jasper or porphyry, close to an exquisite pillar of malachite, the host or hostess will be found. Sniffing from his cold, scratching her lice- and flea-bites, the host or hostess will greet the guest.

But in this extravagance, in this slipshod haphazard living, fortunes melt. The Tsar encourages the mad expenditures, and the nobility do not notice their own graceless transition from riches to penury. Estates, serfs, family plate, and finally these very town mansions, are mortgaged to the state bank, and eventually forfeited. Ever since the revolt of 1825 the Tsar has not quite

trusted his nobles; he would take serfs and power away from them if he could, but without abolishing serfdom or giving power to any other class.

Merchants are the rising class, even though the law is against them, hindering their acquirement of serfs and estates. Some serfs, going to cities in search of poll-tax or quit-rent earnings, prosper through crafts or trades and so are able to pay to their landlords more than the customary periodic contributions. Some can and do buy their freedom. The ancient order is crumbling, yet the nobles are intent on living in the same old way—on a grand foot, the Russians call it—and little encouragement is in fact needed from the Tsar for the lords thus to fritter away their resources.

A noble on a decline may yet own a house or rent an apartment. But, instead of the old-time swarm of servitors, he has only a serf or two at the callbell's distance. He may have no serf, and so prepares his own tea and toast, and sends for his dinner to a near-by restaurant. Nevertheless, he will go on entertaining. The day before, he hires floor-waxers to polish his parquets; he engages caterers and lackeys; he dresses in his last-best. Once the party is over, he goes back to his bathrobe, which is ordinarily his clothing by day as well as night. He has long since dispensed with a bed and sleeps on his only sofa, while his serf, should he still have one, naps close by on a floor pallet.

And yet lower, are the numberless retired officers and officials who live in tenement houses, three and four of them attended by one orderly. They drink, they play cards; occasionally they extract from trunks their only uniforms to strut out to Nevsky Prospect. They have gambled away their inheritances and their salaries, they are now nobles in name only.

In the same huge tenement houses, newly built but already peeled and stenching (many a building an ant-hill of four thousand inhabitants), and also in the crooked one-story houses of outlying sections, there dwell merchants' sons who do not wish to be merchants, and priests' sons whose new god is Hegel or Fourier, and nobles' sons who have renounced—not gambled

away—their inheritances. They are called *raznochintsy*, or people of various and nondescript ranks. Rank means nothing to them. To some indeed it is poison. They agitate against it subtly, cleverly, persistently. They are students, professors, writers, musicians, artists, and office clerks. They meet in groups where the French theory of equality is discussed and extolled, where the cause of the Decembrists is recalled. They write novels of rare feeling, where they bare their own dreams and doings with the same fine impartiality and talent with which they scalp their friends' heads and dig into their roommates' hearts.

Here, in such tenements as well as in the log houses of sprawling suburbs; here, amid impoverished officers and declassed priestlings, next to consumptive seamstresses and wistful Magdalenes, the ex-engineer branded by the Tsar as a fool—Feodor Dostoyevsky—was living up to his own promise, was outpacing the Tsar by writing stories, by fixing on paper the new Russia he was seeing around him on the crumbling bases of the old one.

The Tsar, whose eyes bored through every suspicious person or movement, at home or abroad, like a pair of leaden bullets; the Tsar, whose lifelong program was to quell, to oppress, and to persecute, somehow missed the full importance of the change. Miraculously, like green shoots in a stone casemate, the ideas of freedom, the spirit of inquiry and revolt, once more sprouted forth despite Nicholas and his gendarmes.

Within a few steps of the Winter Palace, in a modest flat, a certain petty official, Petrashevsky by name, held each Friday his at-home. Young noblemen, small officials, struggling journalists, came here to discuss Fourier's books, to implant socialism in one another's minds, to hope and plan for Russia's better day. These Fridays began in 1845. The following winter Dostoyevsky would join them.

Through his spies and gendarmes Nicholas vaguely knew of the new generation and its aspirations. But he was sure that his iron glove held Russia firmly and securely by the throat.

Did he not spend money enough on his henchmen, on all those whom he thought he could trust?

II

Whistler observed:

The Emperor gave to whom he pleased. Others in authority did the same. The mass was ground beneath so that the few in authority might hog their places. The mass was fooled by periodic displays of magnificence.

Whistler noted the custom on New Year's day and Easter Sunday, also on the Emperor's birthday, to distribute in the august name a shower of ranks, decorations, and sums of money. In each branch of government the minister might divide any funds on hand with whomever he chose. This New Year's of 1845 Whistler learned that among the gifts of Nicholas was one amounting, in American money, to three hundred thousand dollars to the court's head man who was already perhaps the richest man in the Empire. As a specimen of smaller transactions under the system, Whistler witnessed how the ready cash in the department of railroads was parceled out to the officers, how Count Kleinmichel did not hesitate to run his pencil through the names of some, so that a number of the worthiest men received nothing. And no one could complain, for these were gifts, and persons in Russia had very little by right.

At first Whistler had been unwilling to believe all he heard of the corruption in the various branches of government, but now he must confess: "I have seen things that astonish me."

No, he was not at all impressed with the pomp of the Tsar's court. Beneath the veneer he saw the appalling thievery and galling injustice.

He felt that it was all the natural result of the system. Nor was it an easy matter to alter the system. The machine was in motion, he pointed out, and it was governed by certain laws be they good or bad. Not even the Tsar, remarked Whistler, could with impunity interfere with it:

"Fear keeps everybody within his orbit lest he be crushed, as he most certainly would if he got in the way of the great car."

None but Americans could appreciate the blessings of security of law and the justice of public opinion!

America was remembered like a fragment of an old poignant dream. . . .

His son George was back in the States, home from his dog-eating epicureanism in the Sandwich Islands. Again the youth was restlessly indecisive and wrote to his father that he should like to come to Russia after all, to enter the Tsar's service.

Major Whistler replied that he wanted George to come for a short period only. The Tsar's service? Everybody was in service in Russia, 'twas true, but the most servile of all services Whistler had ever seen. What a mistake he himself should have made had he accepted the offer to enter the Tsar's service when he had first come here. With what relief he repeated: "I rank nobody, and nobody ranks me!"

Whistler said he was free to act, talk, and think as an equal with everybody, and that was more than anyone else in Russia could say.

Down the corridor of time Russia had been underknown. As a matter of fact, the whole of Europe had been romantically misrepresented to his native land. He remembered his two stays in England with something akin to displeasure; on his short acquaintance with Western Europe he found much of it either a bore or an insult. The more Whistler saw of Europe, either Eastern or Western, the less he thought of it. He wrote home to America:

"Difficult as it sometimes is for young men to obtain suitable employment in our country, it is an open field compared to all Europe. Ours is the only country worth living in. I wish with all my heart all our people could visit Europe. They would return satisfied and be thankful for the blessings they enjoy."

No, George must not even think of such a dreary thing as serving Tsar Nicholas. The plan was not worth a toss of a button. The youth's kin in Russia would be glad if he came—for a visit, not to stay and serve.

The Major himself looked forward to summer when the work on the railroad would be resumed, to finishing this job within three years, to returning home in 1848. He hoped to save a little money by then, so that the family would be able to settle down in Brooklyn near Joseph Swift.

He continued to toy with the idea of returning home this very year of 1845. Yes, he would throw up the sponge, let the railroad of the Tsar go hang! He would be back on American soil by September and take his chance of appointment in the steam marine.

Of these plans he wrote to the Swifts and others, but his friends in the States doubted the wisdom of such a step. The people at home were proud to hear of Whistler's high position in St. Petersburg, of the Tsar's flattering urgings to enter Russia's permanent service; they were pleased that a fellow Yankee had risen so loftily in the estimate of the fabulous Tsar. Surely a feather in the American cap! On March 1, 1845, the New York *Spirit of the Times* treated the situation with fond facetiousness:

"Letters from the Emperor Nicholas I inform us, that when the great Russian rail-road is completed, Major W., the American Engineer, will be retained as steam *Whistler* to the train."

Refuting the rumors of his alleged desire to remain in Russia and so be lost to the States forever, Whistler wrote bitterly about the Tsar's land, and on March the twenty-seventh Joseph Swift scribbled to the Major "a caution not to write me too plainly of the misdoings of Klein Michel, lest your letters should be overhauled and you sent to Siberia."

III

It was a long, cold winter. Weeks and months crept slowly amid deep snow. From the city came tales of suffering. With a shock Whistler and Anna heard that there were in St. Petersburg a number of British poor. Houseless aging seamen, former governesses and teachers, struggling ex-stewards and ex-stablemen, old butlers who had outlived their usefulness and so were cut

adrift, these constituted the humblest stratum of the Factory. After the long years away from England they seemed to hold no craving for her shores; their English talk was strange and strained, clogged with Russian words and idioms. Yet they were strangers in this land too; the Factory as a unit would not think of aiding them. The pastor and his wife, acting on their own, arranged charity bazaars, while Doctor Rogers treated many poor British free of charge and even supplied them with medicine from his apothecary at his own expense. The Whistlers helped with food and money.

A long, cold winter! The Major took daily sledge drives to the railroad camps, to Alexandrovsky, to Tsarskoye Selo, and even as far as Cronstadt. It was terrible to meet icy winds in the open plains, but he looked defiance in a furry *shuba*, a sealskin cap, and stout fur boots. Sometimes the road was smooth and the weather windless-bright; then the sledge bells reminded him of the old days in America. Riding in his open sledge, Whistler visited Colonel Kraft and was surprised when the Russian rushed forward to rub the Major's face with snow—the frost's marks on Whistler's nose and cheeks were that menacing! As Whistler alighted he told his cocher Nikolai to drive into a stable. The ponies had to be sheltered, and the man was to warm himself.



From Sears, *Illustrated Description of the Russian Empire*

But the coacher said: "*Nichevo.*" Everything was "never mind" to a Russian. A Russian face was hardy. It was only on return to town that the coacher would submit his face to cook-grease rubbing.

To Cronstadt the Major went less on business than to chat with Captain Kruger, an English navyman in the Tsar's employ. Practically at any moment there was in Kruger's house a table-spread awaiting his guests, and most of all a sea-pie—an excellent hodge-podge of meat, vegetables and pastry, the whole stewed in a pot. On occasion Captain Kruger came to the capital to attend a lecture, say, on Milton, given in the vestry on the Quay by a learned member of the Factory. He would use the opportunity to visit the Whistlers. Here, to Anna, he took pains to display deep religious feelings, and he ate and praised Alicia's sweet curd and cream.

With Jimmie the jolly Englishman would have an argument about the dispute between Great Britain and the United States over the Oregon territory. Jimmie had privately felt quite patriotic on the subject: if the British were going to America it was only to be licked by the Yankees. But to the Captain he would reluctantly admit that the faraway wilderness was not worth a war between such brotherly countries as England and the States, that it had best be left to the ownership of the roaming Redskins.

The war possibility was more than a subject for jests. The British and the Russians at the Merchants' Exchange talked of little else, and war speculation in stocks and goods was rife. Anna entered in her diary:

"Much as I yearn to be recalled to my native land I pray it may not be the trump of war, which will make it my husband's stern duty to take arms against a country I so much love as England."

IV

Between the guests, between the rumors and alarums, life in the Whistler house lumbered along at a frozen pace. There were many hours for Anna to while away in writing and praying and

hoping. Despite the double sashes, sharp wind penetrated the rooms fronting the Neva, and, as she wrote her letters and diary, Anna was wrapped in her gray duffle cloak and kept her feet on a heated stool. Even at that, she sought out the warmest corner of the room, by the stove. Amid such colds the Whistlers learned to drink larger quantities of hot tea; instead of the limited English kettle, a commodious Russian samovar would be ordered up. When the winds shifted, rooms became overheated, bringing sluggishness of step and mind.

Martha Ropes would come of an evening to embroider a pair of slippers and prattle with Debo about approaching weddings in the Factory. On a secret girlish whim Debo suddenly enrolled in the local German Academy of Sacred Music, but Anna's amazed happiness did not last long: the mad Butter Week whirled upon St. Petersburg, and Debo reverted to her usual pleasures.

Swept by the wave of balls and rides the girl kept such late hours that she was no longer able to rise in time for breakfast. She introduced a most revolutionary manner—that of having breakfast in her own room long after the appointed time. "The privation is to me," Anna complained, "that she is not among us when we meet at family worship." Too, she could not be sure whether Debo said her prayers before bedtime. In vain did Anna hint: "From a prayerless bed many do not rise." She hoped that Whistler would be grieved by his daughter's behavior, but he gave no sign.

At a Factory party there was waltzing, and even though Debo did not waltz it was she who played the tunes for the unnatural twirl. Anna could not contain herself. She talked of the outrage to the other guests, who were mostly British ladies and gentlemen, but who nevertheless would not share her disgust. Should she halt Debo and take her away from the piano? She did nothing, saying to her inner self in histrionic apology: "I so yearn for sympathy from Debo that I am willing to meet her more than halfway—when there is no glaring folly."

When Whistler arrived, freed for the day from his duties in the city, she turned over to him the task of keeping an eye on Debo, and herself went home.

Father and daughter returned late. It seemed that Whistler had repeatedly reminded Debo of the hour, but the girl had been so happy with the music and chatter that she had prevailed upon him to stay on.

Again Anna searched Whistler's face for signs of displeasure, and thought she detected some, but he was silent, and so she decided that he wanted to suffer over Debo's selfishness without doing or saying anything at all about it. She imagined him a martyr to Debo's giddiness. Very well, then. Anna would give him wordless sympathy.

V

The Butter Week passed, to Anna's relief.

Not that she appreciated Lent any better, this dreadful six-week period in the wake of the Butter carnivals. During Lent theatrical performances were prohibited and the Italian opera was closed—a fine law, said Anna, but what a horrid inconsistency to provide morning concerts and *tableaux vivants* instead! Where were the Emperor and the Empress? Why weren't they doing something about it? "If I were Empress of these vast domains of Russia," Anna said, "I would cultivate a taste for sacred music in the circles of fashion by prohibiting any other during the Lent concerts at least."

And the barbaric diet during Lent which the Russians mis-called fast! If there was anything good in the theory of such semi-starvation, the practice inevitably resulted in much social inequality. These six weeks the Russians were forbidden flesh or fowl or even milk, eggs and butter; they had to be satisfied with fish, raw or pickled, also vegetables, bread, porridge and oil. The rich managed well, what with the fresh salmon from Lake Ladoga, oysters from Hamburg, wine from France, and olive oil from Italy. The capital's hothouses provided them with asparagus and lettuce, with pineapples and strawberries. But what of the poor? They had to eat cabbage soup with black bread dunked in the rancid Russian oil. During Lent there was much illness among the poor.

So Anna carped and complained, rain or shine, Butter Week or Lent. Russia was bad for her. In America she had never grumbled and whined so much. The Major longed for the old American days.

All the long way to Tsarskoye Selo the Major would ride to beg of Colonel Todd a nostalgic look at the American newspapers. Anna was now irritated at the mere thought of Todd—the Ambassador should really send the newspapers to her house. His glibness could not cover up the stark fact that he was a selfish gay oldster, a dog in the manger.

Todd was having a fine time in Russia but it was drawing to its close. News came from America that in the last presidential races the Whigs had lost and the Democrats had carried the land. James Knox Polk was inaugurated on March 4, 1845, and he was an expansive and energetic gentleman. It would be a matter of but a few months before Todd would be recalled, and another envoy, a Democrat, appointed.

VI

Letters reaching the Whistlers from the States advised of yet another, although less debonair, victim of the Polk triumph. The victim was Mac.

The bitter irony of it was that Anna's brother, a stanch Democrat and Polk's fellow Southerner, had electioneered for the man, but lost his political scalp nevertheless—and his job, to boot. For the Democrats of the Dorr school would not forget Mac's role in the Rhode Island rebellion of three years back. Now, in 1845, was their chance. They pressed upon Polk, and he removed Mac from the post of engineer of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, so that Mac had no chance to prove his worth—could not complete the great dry dock he had begun there.

Mac complained and drank. In St. Petersburg no letters reached the Whistlers from Mac himself, but other channels relayed the distressing tidings. Gayety, journeyings: the Major heard of Mac's goings and doings with much uneasiness. Why wouldn't Mac's

kin in the States stop and shame him? To Whistler, that whole family seemed demented. A sad mess!

Anna would not discuss her brother's behavior. Not a word escaped her prim lips or pen on the unbelievable subject. Ostrich-like she attempted to bury her head in the shallow sands of her own asceticism; stridently she rose against the frivolity and amusement of the Russians, of Debo, of everyone and anyone but her own brother.

VII

In mid-April there was a thaw. Bright weather came, however temporarily, and on such rare days Jimmie and Willie would leave the breakfast table before eight o'clock to trundle their new hoops on the Quay. Debo and their mademoiselle accompanied them to supervise the play as well as to get fresh air for themselves. Spring was surely not far off—see the boys' cheeks, bright-red like damask roses; note their buoyant spirits!

A sudden snowstorm belied the hope, and one morning the Neva presented a strange scene: hundreds of men were cutting a free waterway in the center. This was to break the onrush of the ice when the time came for it, and thus save the bridges. Certainly, Whistler said, the Russians were most remarkable for precaution when they wanted to save life or property: "In our country it would be a serious expense to cut up a river as they are doing on the Neva." And once more he heard the Russian explanation that the river was so cut because of the Tsar's wish to give employment to his subjects.

The spring was cold and late, and work on the railroad slow in reopening. Whistler was sullen. But on Monday, May the fifth, Anna was aroused at an unusually early hour. She heard her husband's voice, high and excited. All the young ones were in the drawing room—even Debo in her dressing gown was there to enjoy the sight.

The Neva was flowing! Its dirty winter garb had been cast off in the night. Within a week, steamers from the Baltic would come through. All day long, ice in great dull flats floated by.

Everyone was in a quicker, sweeter mood. In the evening Whistler returned from Alexandrovsky in a fine spell of spirits: he had had a pleasant drive in a drozhky, and now cheerily demanded a cup of hot chocolate to warm himself. Henrietta Law and Debo were laughing and singing at the piano, and Anna smilingly paged Miss Rigby's book on Russia. She had read it once before, on the eve of leaving Boston, but the text was much more forcible now that Anna knew this country and its ridiculous people even better than the authoress did.

Virgin ice was presently passing the Whistlers' windows; this was Lake Ladoga ice. The Americans looked forward to a colorful ceremony. When the Neva was entirely free, hundreds of boats would be ready to navigate but not a single one would dare to start until the Governor of the Peter-and-Paul fortress crossed the river. He would fill a goblet with the Neva water and present it to the waiting Emperor as a signal that the river was unfettered at last. Nicholas would either drink or spill the water and return the goblet full of either wine or gold pieces.

The Whistler apartment faced the Academy of Fine Arts, on the island site of the Neva. Out of her bedroom window Anna could see the imposing school-front and, below, its principal ferry-stair. With much pleasure she awaited the time when, the ice cleared, she would be able to watch her darling Jemie get into the ferry to cross to the Academy. Yes, with the ice wholly gone, he hoped to go for his drawing lessons as frequently as three times a week.

Chapter Nineteen

THE Imperial Academy of Fine Arts dated back to 1757, to the time of Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great. Through the closing years of her reign, and then through the long sovereignty of Empress Catherine II, and yet later, in the quarter-century of Alexander's rule, it was a school of talented painters, sculptors, and especially architects, mostly German and French and some Italian. Russian artists were gradually coming to the fore, learning the methods and absorbing the standards of the distinguished foreigners, and contributing their own inner fires and peculiar techniques. Progress there was, unmistakably. But, abruptly, toward the end of Alexander's reign there was a decline—just as there was a decline and stagnation in the entire social and political fabric of Russia toward the end of Alexander's time, a cruel matter after the high hopes of his liberal beginnings. This decline became most pronounced while Nicholas I sat on the throne.

In Nicholas' time the Academy of Fine Arts was run as if it were just another regiment. Students and professors alike were required to wear uniforms. When paintings were bought abroad, not an artist from the Academy but a general of the army was sent to fetch them. Ballroom dancing being deemed a fine art, it was on the program of the Academy for the willing, and of the willing there were many, for in the Tsar's Russia dancing was not only a luxury but a necessity as well. It was said, and not without reason, that good ballroom dancing was a quick step to a Russian's advancement. Cadets from various colleges came to the Academy to dance quadrilles in groups of fifty and more, and a dancing master was respected here no less than a professor of still-life, which is perhaps not saying much. Nicholas used the Academy for many another reason of no connection with fine arts. It could be no otherwise with the sovereign, for whom the most harmonious music was that of the drum, who valued those paintings which provided him with his own portraits or with scenes of battles.

II

It was on a Monday in April of 1845 that Jimmie, now almost eleven, began his study of drawing at the Imperial Academy. Sitting at her window Anna was daily comforted by the sight of the building as well as by the knowledge that Jimmie was enjoying his lessons, that he was not so lone and lost as a new pupil was apt to be, for in his class he stood next to a youth of sixteen who, being English, noticed the boy in a friendly way.

Yet he had some feeling of dismay. He was entered in the second class, Heads from Nature, under Professors Vistelius and Voivov, and there were two higher classes which Jimmie feared he would never reach. His tutor, an officer who on Saturdays gave him private lessons at home, was himself a student in the highest grade, and Jimmie regarded him with awe.

The Academy itself chained and crushed rather than awed him. It was an enormous building, one of the biggest on the Vasilievsky Island. The beautiful Academy—Maxwell used to say—the faultless elegance of the Academy! But Jimmie and Anna read and appreciated Miss Rigby's description of it as an outwardly splendid pile, with ten times more space than should have been allowed for the purpose, ten times more out of repair, and surely ten thousand times filthier. The odoriferous Academy, the Englishwoman called it.

Two small granite sphinxes, said to have been brought from Egypt, ornamented the space in front of the building. A grand staircase led to halls of imposing appearance but laughably poor with true works of art. As permanent fixtures the visitor saw casts from the Laocoon, the Gladiator, and sundry other celebrated statues of antique times. Humorlessly aping the classic style, a marble bust of Tsar Nicholas I—the heavy blind-staring mask of a Greek demigod—lorded it over the Academy.

From time to time, exhibitions of paintings by native artists were held in the halls. On certain days these shows were free to people of all strata of society, and many amateurs of painting or followers of fashion trooped in—for the Tsar had made it fashionable to pretend love for art and attend these exhibitions. Every

nobleman who tried to climb at the court, every rising moneybag who hoped for bigger and more profitable contracts, came here to gaze in a daze, to laud the miserable productions, to grow stupidly lyrical over Brullov's huge canvas, *The Last Day of Pompeii*.

Karl Brullov was a Russian of German extraction. At this time he was in his forties but already in bad health and rumored to drink so excessively as to be living his last years. He worked little, but his amazing gift of speed stood him in good stead. Some twenty years earlier he was graduated from the Academy with such honors that he won a trip to Italy where he remained for thirteen years. It was in Italy, in the early 1830s, that he painted *The Last Day of Pompeii*. The canvas was a great success in Italy and Russia, but when shown in Paris it was derisively judged to be twenty years behind its time.

For, although a good technician of portraiture, easily solving elementary problems of life composition and motion, Brullov was not a psychologist: he caught the features but not the spirit of his subjects. A yet graver failing was his lack of interest in the problems of light, color, and air. His preference for yellow-reddish tones was monotonous; his methods seemed to have been learned by rote; his touch, though powerful, was hard and dry; his style stiff and falsely noble. To an astounding degree his soulless but polished art mirrored the hollow and shiny Russia of Nicholas I.

Returning to Russia in 1836, this curious painter reigned in her arts for more than twelve years as the idol of the government and the aristocracy. In the 1840s, ailing, idling, overpraised, he produced mediocre canvases, and but a few good or excellent ones. After his death he was severely taken for a stuffy fool whose art was zero with trimmings. Only long afterward, a more discerning generation rescued a few of Brullov's merits: on the whole condemning his work and influence, it found and noted at least the technical ease of the portraitist as a contribution to the progress of Russian painting.

From 1836, the first year of his professorship at the Academy, to 1849, when he left Russia to die in his beloved Italy, Karl Brullov had a large circle of student-admirers, some of them fair

painters in their own right, but all slavish worshipers at the shrine of the master. They refused to see life around them; like their teacher, they sought unusual themes, theatrical situations, exotic scenes, historic and biblical subjects. The so-called Brullov School gave Russia not a single first-class artist, but out of it there emerged a number of facile touts, capable technicians, skillful imitators, some of whose paintings to this day are mistakenly ascribed to Brullov himself.

In the flock of small milk-and-water students of Brullov's, none bent the knee with humbler diligence than a young man named Alexander Koritsky—that is, young in 1845, when he was twenty-nine. In Brullov's last years he was very close to the Master. Perpetuating the glory of Brullov was the self-chosen mission of Koritsky's life; in Russia, throughout the third quarter of the nineteenth century, he was known as the smugly happy possessor of a number of Brullov's paintings.

This fawning aide of the heavy Master, this middling-piddling student-painter, this Russian named Alexander Ossipovich Koritsky, was the first instructor in art of the American boy who later became known as James Abbott McNeill Whistler.

III

Art in the Russia of the 1840s was among the few meeting-grounds of many classes. A serf on a furlough from his landlord would be sculpturing or painting by the side of a pampered young noble whose every step at home or in the Academy was attended by a serf-lackey. An ink-stained clerk, a glib-tongued shopsalesman, and a prim official of a junior rank could be found next to one another in the night sketching classes of the Academy. It was surprising how many serfs there were, studying art to quench their inner fire—and, in the long or short run, to enrich their owners. What tragedies were enacted when owners refused rich ransoms from their successful serf-artists but ordered their return in person to the manors, there to work as menials and between duties to paint portraits of the noble family and their friends! If noblemen allowed their talented property to remain in St. Peters-

burg they took away the artists' earnings by increasing their *obrok* money.

A story was told of a serf who was proving himself one of the best students at the Academy of Arts and who learned that for three thousand rubles his possessor would free him. He told this to his freeman friends. Poor as they were, they managed to take up a subscription. But when the artist brought the money the owner said: "I changed my mind. You cannot go free for less than five thousand rubles."

There was no possibility of finding the additional two thousand rubles. The case was brought to the attention of Grand Duchess Maria, honorary president of the Academy, and she wrote a polite note to the owner, saying that the original sum should suffice. The letter was delivered by the artist himself. The nobleman read it—and sent the artist to the stable, which was the usual place for serfs' flogging. Twenty-five blows were the young man's punishment: "For your boldness in involving such an exalted person as the Grand Duchess, whom of course I am obliged to obey." The birching done, the nobleman freed the artist for the original amount.

When a nobleman did not want to mess up his own premises with serfs' flogging, he sent the wretches to the nearest police-station with a note specifying how many times the whip or birch-cane should crack against their bared backs and buttocks. Not at all rare was the sight of a serf-artist carrying such a note to the precinct guardhouse, or hardly able to walk after the beating.

Suicide was the frequent escape of serf-artists.

The oppressive regime of Nicholas I could not but be reflected in art. Corruption extended to the *mores* in this field no less than in any other of the stifling tsardom: if an artist was not a serf but had money and was unscrupulous he could, and did, buy a journalist's praise, and so increased his clientele. Still better, he secured with flattery the patronage of a general, a cabinet minister, or a high-placed mistress, and soon nobles and merchants rushed to buy his paintings—through fear, or with a view of obtaining favors.

Redtape cluttered art and its enjoyment. Close to the Winter

Palace, in the stately Hermitage of tall windows, two thousand canvases astonished the visitor—the best of the Flemish school, also many French and Spanish masterpieces, bought mostly by Catherine the Great. But it was not easy to gain admission into the Hermitage. And when a Russian or a foreigner did receive leave to enter, he had to stand before paintings with a military erectness. If he was a man of service—and most Russians were—he had to wear not his everyday surtout and plain epaulettes but his heavy gilded dress uniform, and his helmet or plumed chapeau or shako had to be cradled in the bend of his elbow just so, according to regulations.

Under such circumstances, was there, could there be, living art in Russia?

In the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts many a student and professor asked these questions. The Academy stood on the Vasilievsky Island—an island! An appropriate symbol! The younger men felt they were marooned; longingly they spoke of the mainland. But it was not St. Petersburg on the other shore toward which they yearned—it was Rome of sunny laughing Italy that floated like a mirage before their starved eyes. To go to the Italian mainland from this Russ island, and never to return—the lovely, seldom-attained dream!

IV

Jimmie's eyes were not so much starved as dazzled and dulled by the Tsar's Russia. He saw surfaces blurred and human beings as flat, dim, deadened units; he saw and drew them through a gray-bluish mist. At rare intervals he scented the excessive perfume of the Academy's classicism, yet he respected his masters' titles, aplomb, and influence, and so his own revolt remained largely unexpressed. His was an unusual talent, but this Russian cradle—as later he loved to call his life and schooling in St. Petersburg—hindered rather than helped his development as man and artist.

And yet, in this very period of distorted art and Brullov's dominance, there was a good albeit struggling Russian art—the

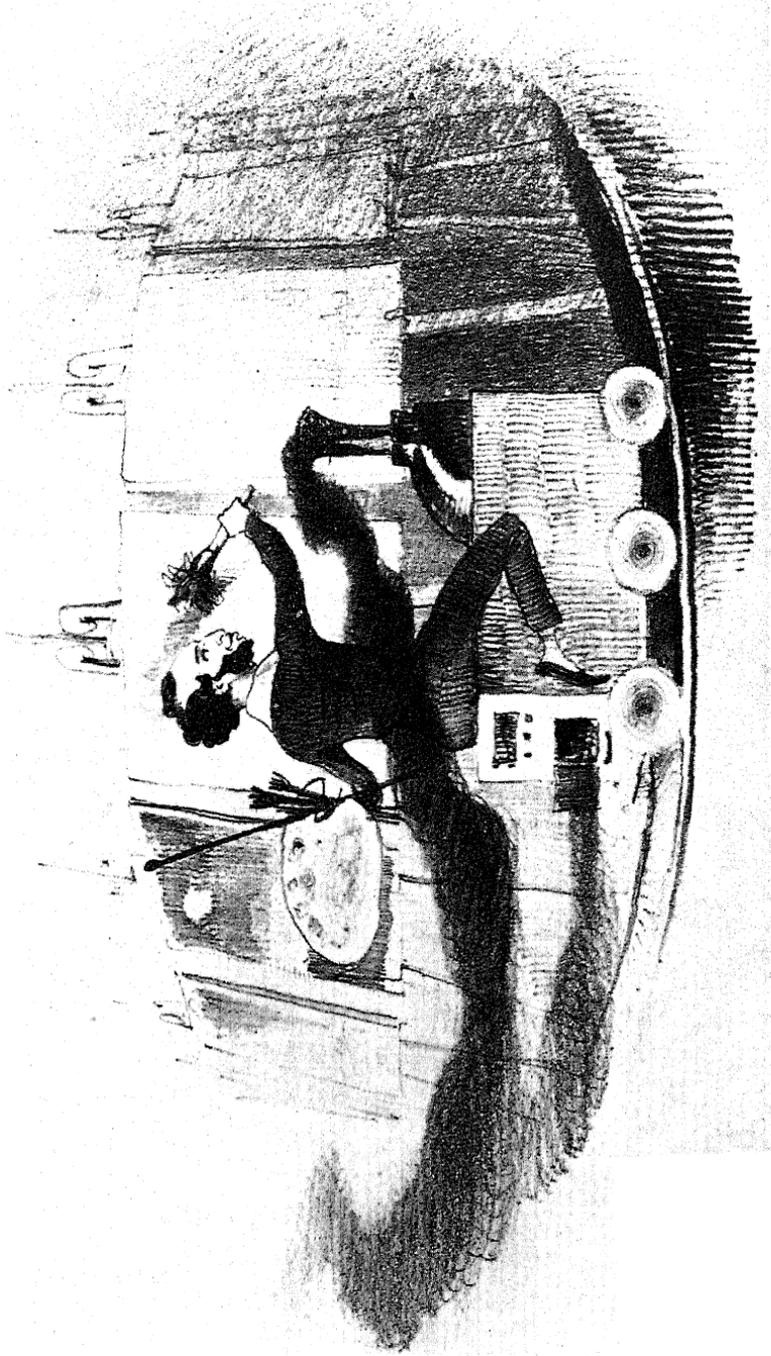
art of Alexis Venetsianoy, a merchant's son who drew peasants and peasant life; the art of Paul Fedotov, an officer of the guards who gave up his commission to devote all his time to painting the sober themes of everyday existence; the art of Vasily Timm and Alexander Aghin who sketched market scenes and artisans' shops and roadside episodes, who illustrated books and worked for magazines with humor and verve. Realism simple and unpretentious but sometimes with a heartiness well-nigh Flemish, realism at times forbidden and punished by the authorities, life of people other than those of the court and the church, topics of social satire and timid protest, tones of air and light masterfully deep—such was the content of those oils and charcoals and woodcuts.

So unwelcome was the credo of these artists, so unheralded their painting and unrewarded their labor, that beginning with 1840 a number of them in a wave of discouragement and malaise of soul forsook their sort and went over to the enemy, to Brullov's feet and camp, exchanging their own liveliness for his stilted concepts. Only a few remained loyal to their ideals or, like Aghin, left Brullov to take up freer art. No wonder that Jimmie, coming to the Academy in the midst of the debacle of true Russian art, was totally untouched by the life-giving waters of this minority. For in 1845 it was hard to find such waters—they had been ebbing too fast.

Brullov of the ponderous brummagem touch was everywhere: not only in the Academy but also in the church of St. Isaac and in practically every sizable palace of the royalty. In the New Palace both Anna and Jimmie stood before the lifeless picture of the late Grand Duchess Alexandra painted by Brullov. The lovely portrait, said Anna, so like the Duchess in life and health even though painted after her death! See the spirit of the Duchess journeying upward to a palace above the blue sky! See the imperial robes and crown, and that remarkable halo behind the crown! See her passing through stars shining all around her! Is it not a soul-shaking picture?

A most interesting picture, agreed Jimmie.

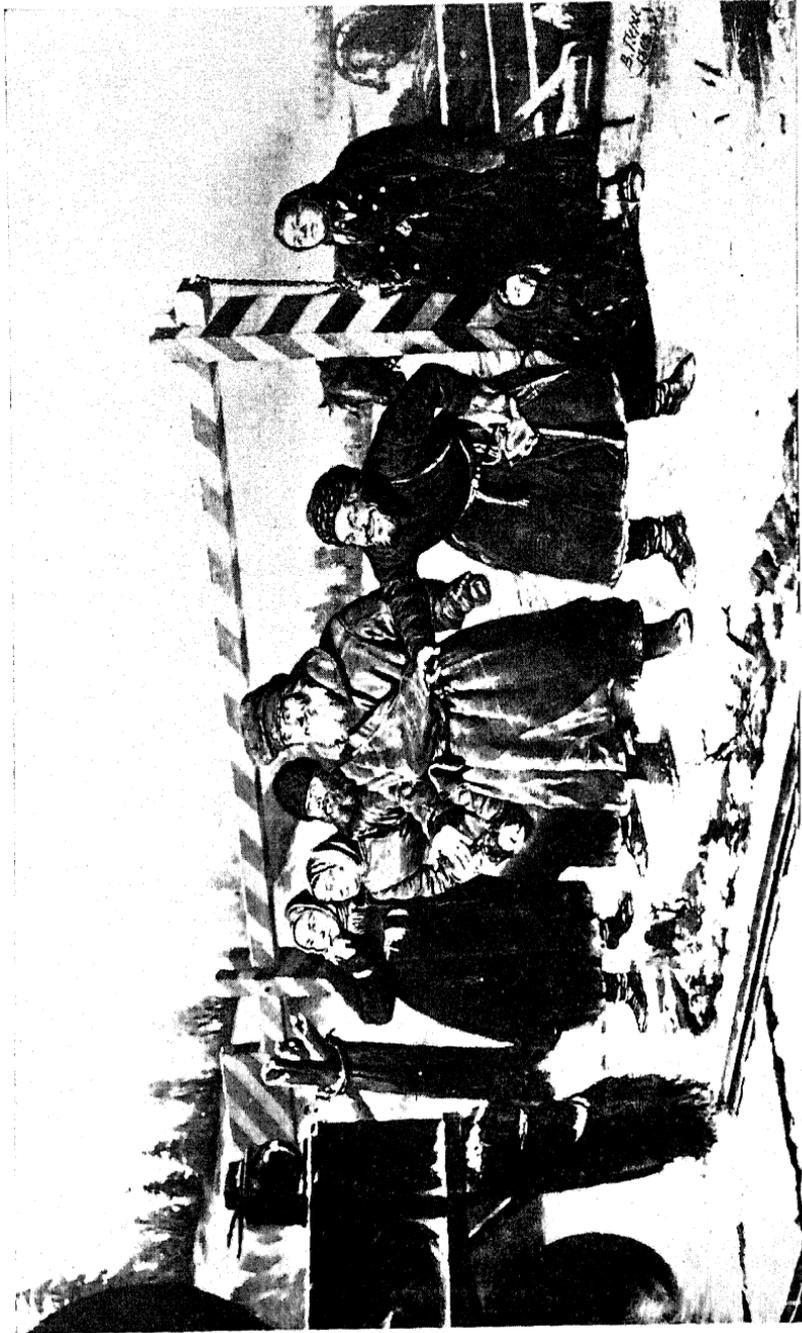
The talented boy was like one hypnotized—by Anna—by Brullov—by this Russia.



From *Yeralash*, St. Petersburg magazine, for 1847

THE FLIGHT OF A GENIUS

A Russian caricature showing the possible use of the locomotive for mass-production in art.



From a painting by Vasily Perov

PEASANTS WONDERING AT A LOCOMOTIVE

Chapter Twenty

EARLY in the year Nicholas ordered his censors not to allow in public print any articles about the railroad without first submitting them to Kleinmichel. A liberal-minded censor obeyed like the rest, but wrote in his secret diary:

“With us each official tries to avoid publicity and to surround all his activities with dense darkness. This way is of course better for the official. For in darkness one can do anything. Remarkable thing this Russian administration of ours!”

Kleinmichel was stealing, cheating, blundering. He wanted no publicity.

The Russians discussed the new road just the same, and not in tones wished by the Count. In private correspondence, in whispered conversations, rumors and complaints were sent on their grapevine way. Think what could have been done with those millions of rubles that were being spent in the interior of Russia! Were the Americans alone to handle the matter, they would have with the same money connected not only the two capitals—if build that line you must—but also would have tied by rail both cities with Odessa, and Warsaw, and Nizhni-Novgorod. At that, the Americans would have surely saved enough funds to build a railroad half the distance to Irkutsk in Siberia. For private builders were not the state—they were more efficient, more honest. Besides, in America and Western Europe there were no such sticky hands of officialdom as Russia was cursed with: here, out of each four rubles three stuck to evil hands, and only one was spent on the job.

And truly, matters stood ill with Kleinmichel's accounts. The Tsar did him a good turn by ordering the comptrollers to desist from auditing the Count's ledgers. Once a bold courtier (or perhaps a grand duke) asked Nicholas the cost of the new toy of shining metals, and the Tsar replied: “God and Kleinmichel alone know.”

Why pick on Kleinmichel when every Russian seemed to be thieving? To the heir-apparent, Nicholas remarked: "I believe that in the entire nation only you and I do not steal. Such are the limits of our power—we cannot compel people to be honest."

His subjects might have felt, however, that it was honest to cheat and steal under the system for which the Tsar was so greatly responsible. Was he not stealing their freedom and honor and property? Theft was their only recourse. A Russian, observed De Custine, stole with an easy conscience and serene face.

II

There was no denying at least one point of the complaint: Kleinmichel's realm of public roads and buildings was an expensive and corrupt mire. Roads brought the state no profit despite the high tolls. For the personnel was inflated, and the salaries of the higher officials were devilishly bloated. Too much state interference with travel was another reason: commercial and private traffic was hampered by passports and permits, or rather the extreme difficulty with which they were issued, particularly to lower-class people and foreigners. The redtape of such passes was the most involved and chaotic in the world, not excepting China. And Kleinmichel was blamed for much of it.

The Count was neither an economist nor an engineer. In an upper-class German way his mind possessed a single rut, and this in the 1840s happened to be the new railroad, not because Russia needed it but because the Tsar was drooling over the novel toy. To everything else in his ministry Kleinmichel paid scarce attention. Other land- and water-routes of Russia staggered and lingered anyhow. He spent enormous sums like so many playchips, and much of course he stole. Had he been not a martinet but a true minister of his government, had he known something of economics and engineering, he could have easily stretched the funds, which the railroad eventually consumed, to bring the iron path not to Moscow alone, but to the steppes of the Black and Azov seashores as well.

Out there, in South Russia, lay the main riches of the Empire:

coal and iron, grain and wool, and limitless fields of fertile promise to unborn generations. Thence Russia's destiny was said to be pointing toward ancient Byzantium—modern Turkey. It was there that Nicholas was building the new naval base of Sevastopol, to threaten the Ottoman and to spite the Britisher, strong base but ill-serviced from the interior.

Ill-serviced, isolated, exposed. All because of the lack of roads.

III

Whistler felt that never was a country more in need of improved transportation than Russia. The difficulties of climate were great, he admitted, but they were more of an excuse than a handicap. What Peter the Great did in his time was wonderful, Whistler said, but since then no true progress had been accomplished. Much more had been done since Peter for the external rather than internal improvement of Russia. There she was, a giantess formidable to her neighbors but rotten inside.

Yes, Russia was rich. Perhaps she had a future. His friends in America, engineers and military like himself—General Joseph Swift, for instance—were much interested in whatever Whistler had to say on the subject of Russia's riches. In response to their insistent queries the Major sent maps of the country and of the future railroad, and wrote in detail explaining how to decipher the queer Russian legends and captions.

The great mineral resources of Russia, he advised, were not only in the south but even more in the north and northeast. The Russian distances were immense, the winter was long and severe. Yet so valuable were those resources that despite the natural barrier something should be done about them, something in the way of railroads.

Whistler agreed with the natives about the south. He felt that if the railroad he was building were to be extended beyond Moscow it should first of all go in the direction of the Black Sea. Of course, the Volga direction was also a possibility, but in a pinch that could wait, since out there the Russians had ample water-routes for their traffic and trade and could be satisfied with

such mode of transport for some time to come. The southern steppes should be crossed by the iron horse at the earliest opportunity.

IV

North or south, east or west, the ways of Russians were slow. Even this line of four hundred-odd miles crawled forward at a snail's pace. If only days would become brighter and drier, so that the serfs would resume digging and building!

Fair weather came at last and, as usual in Russia, all at once. The transition from winter to summer Whistler found most sudden and exhilarating. Rejuvenated he was as again thousands of serfs came to the line of the roadbed, camps dotted the emerald landscape, horses with metal-burdened, brass-shiny couriers and officers rode hurrying slappety-clang through the mud. Work proceeded apace.

Summer rains again came to hinder the digging, for the earth contained too much clay and sand. Still, precisely because the ground absorbed a great deal of this moisture, many of the small streams went dry, and often it was an effort to obtain drinking water. Whistler anticipated difficulty and expense when the time would arrive to water the locomotives.

There were other troubles, too. The previous season some of the contractors, lashed on by Kleinmichel's orders and their own profits, worked the serfs late into the fall, even when it was already too cold to work. This had its price: some of the embankments had been made of frozen clay which melted in the spring, causing those very slides which Whistler at one time had thought impossible.

The year before a few bridges had been begun, and now this part of work was in full heat. Altogether there were to be two hundred bridges and seventy aqueducts. The bridges were of the Howe System, which Whistler was first to introduce in Russia, if not in the whole of Europe. Their foundations were of stone, and superstructures of wood. The cost was low, and most of them lasted as long as thirty-five years. This lowly pine of the super-

structure proved so durable because Whistler had it first treated in special apparatus with green vitriol and chloric calcium. But the cost was only theoretically low: what with the thievery of the officials and contractors, and what with the primitive tools and empty stomachs of the constantly knouted serf-workers, in sad reality the cost mounted to proportions unheard-of on a similar job in America. Compare, Whistler once said to Maxwell, two bridges: this very handsome stone arch across the Msta River at Vyshni-Volochek, 875 feet long, three years in construction, and costing in American money some \$360,000, with the bridge over the Connecticut River, 1260 feet, finished in one year, and costing about \$120,000. Maxwell wrote on returning to America:

“The wages of labor in the United States are many times greater than they are in Russia, and the cost of materials is about the same in both countries. But the American does at least five times the work of the Russian, and by means of assistance derived from improved tools and machinery, and greater mechanical skill, the bridge of the American is nearly completed before the Russian has fairly commenced his labor.”

At first it was not easy for Whistler and Kleinmichel to find Russian contractors willing to risk this novel business of railroad-bridge building. A prominent enterpriser negotiated to supply labor and material for the bridges, but at the last moment, full of misgivings, crawfished timidly and refused to sign the agreement. Kleinmichel flew into a rage, and ordered his subordinates to find another contractor, right this minute.

When the order reached the proper office, a petty nobleman, one Sharabanov, happened to be cooling his weary heels in the anteroom. He had come in the vague hope of securing a small contract for gravel. Ah, a contractor! With Kleinmichel's order in their nervous hands, the officials pounced upon the applicant: he was to be the bridge contractor. The bewildered man tried to escape. He pleaded his lack of special skill required for this job. They waved the excuse aside: with the American supervising the work, a Russian contractor needed no special knowledge of bridge

building. He then pleaded lack of money which he would be supposed to put down as his bond.

"Oh, we'll settle that," the officials replied. "We'll start with bids for one bridge only, and that much money you surely have. Later we'll give you bond money for the other bridges."

The first advance of one hundred thousand rubles was placed before him, and the ne'er-do-well landlord promptly fainted. A surgeon was summoned to revive him with the application of blister-fly. Back on his feet, the bearded cinderella started the business, soon handling work amounting to more than one million rubles, and thus becoming the biggest contractor of Whistler's line.

Success went to his head. Sharabanov the Windy he was presently called, for, while his clerks labored, he could be found in a gypsy camp near St. Petersburg celebrated for its singing and dancing beauties. When in an especially expansive mood he would engage the six costliest boxes in the first tier of the Italian opera and fill them with gypsy girls. As he thus caroused, his was a singular blend of sneer and cherubic smile.

Whistler's technical assistant in charge of bridge construction was a Colonel Zhuravsky. A talented engineer, he now and again made good suggestions of improvements in the work. But more than in bridges he was interested in spiritualism. Surrounded by friend-mystics he spent hours bent over a whirling saucer. These seances were alternated with most feverish spells of his piety. So often did he go to church, so zealous were his bows before the ikons, that the pleased clergy of his favorite Kazansky Cathedral reserved for him a special place of honor in the very altar.

Kleinmichel did not exactly trust such experts. He preferred to deal with Whistler.

V

Kleinmichel wanted this, and he required that, now one thing and now another, and Whistler was the answer to every need and trouble.

The chiefs of construction did nothing without his sanction

or advice. The legend of his ability spread in all directions. The Tsar's favor to him was evident, especially after Nicholas had staged a reprimand to those of his noblemen-engineers who tended to look down on Major Whistler as a low-blood untitled American. And this was the reprimand: On a day set aside for the engineering corps to visit an exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts, the Emperor entered the gallery and, pretending to notice no one else, marched directly toward the Yankee. Taking Major Whistler by the arm, Nicholas walked with him slowly the length of the hall, talking to the foreigner in a manner calculatedly kindly. The nobles took the hint.

Presently Whistler was said to be the most popular American in Russia of his time, surely the most respected one since John Quincy Adams had served in St. Petersburg as his country's envoy. Kleinmichel and the Tsar fell into a flattering but annoying way of regarding Major Whistler as a know-all oracle, a superman, a wonder-worker, a machine-like genius who had a solution for everything. But everything!

They seemed to follow all foreign journals and domestic rumors and, perplexed by these, dragged the American into every head-scratching of theirs. What, for example, was this talk of atmospheric railroads? A messenger arrived after midnight, post-haste and with no warning, looming up in the American's doorway, a figure sudden and fatal-looking, loaded with portfolios, rattling his great spurs and saber. Whistler had to sit up till morning, reading the French article and preparing his refutation of it, then rush to Kleinmichel's office to make the oral report, only to be told to put all this in writing. Whistler was out of humor. He cursed under his breath, but obeyed.

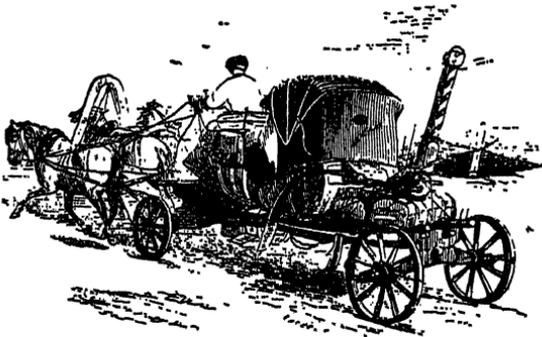
Of inspection tours there was no end. Early in the year Kleinmichel went for the first time to see the shops at Alexandrovsky. Whistler had to come along. The Major and the American managers of the works explained to the Count all the essential details of engine- and car-making, while Kleinmichel and his suite moved stiffly about with much heel-clicking.

"Everything," was Whistler's aside, "everything is done here as if we were in the midst of a war!"

Yet for once, the Major was happy. Things were going well in the shops. He felt it was the finest establishment in Europe. He was only sorry that His Excellency did not know enough to appreciate its merits. The Count was much pleased, however, and according to this Russian system—reflected Whistler—this was all that they, the Americans working in the Tsar's land, could wish for. The rolling stock was being produced well and amply—if only the railroad itself were progressing as smoothly!

To Moscow and back along the *chaussée* Whistler wheeled and walked and rode horseback, intently watching the movement of men and material toward the roadbed of his railroad. Frequently his glance rested on the busy camps near green groves; often he was distressed by the sight of serf-workers flogged, or serf-women and their little ones sweating on the road, weeding the grass from between the stones and planks, lest His Imperial Majesty's eyes be offended by a stray blade when he chanced to pass this way.

Dust rose, vermin bothered the traveler at inn-stops, but the *chaussée* was great and lively. The fine carriage road was symbolic of the whole of Russia: it blended riches with servitude, and grandeur with sloth. Would Whistler's beast on wheels, his iron mount replacing the road of dust and vermin, have a better fate? Would it be symbolic of a nobler, freer, cleaner Russia to come?



From Oliphant's
The Russian Shores

Chapter Twenty-One

IT WAS a summer of partings and arrivals and partings again.

In June, Mrs. Gellibrand and Martha Ropes sailed for Boston, and Anna sent with them her gifts for Sister Kate's children. Debo too was making ready to embark—for England. For Whistler said that the Russian climate was too hard on young girls. Sail for greener shores she must.

But Anna was pregnant and feared that she was not getting her share of attention. Debo must stay. As if to turn Whistler's sympathy her own way, as if to halt Debo's preparations, Anna went to bed with a cold. She had been chilled driving from Alexandrovsky in a drozhky—too open a carriage for this cold June with its damp wind, with the vegetation at least one month behind what it had been the previous year. Dr. Rogers came twice a day, and Anna with a mournful pleasure said that not in many years had she been so ill, so racked with cough.

Jimmie and Willie brought her a bunch of buttercups, the first of the belated season. As the Whistler boys ranged from island to island they saw William Maingay in a sailor's costume, rowing a party of friends in his English barge. Steamers in the meantime were bringing visitors from abroad. William Miller, the pleasant windbag, returned from Scotland carrying packages commissioned by Alicia: a suit of dark-blue tartan for each boy, a bible and a prayerbook bound in one for Anna, while for the Major there was a traveling case containing knife, fork and spoon of steel and silver, a welcome gift for the peregrinating engineer of a railroad being built across swamps and wilderness. Weakened by the fortnight's illness, Anna whispered: "My warmhearted sister . . ."

Miller made the boys merry teaching them a highland dance, while Debo played the quick tune. By this time Anna was up and about, however uncertainly. In the midst of the music and dancing she rose to leave the room, and they understood the hint, at once ceasing the frolic.

II

Debo could stand it no longer. This woman trying to lay down her grim law for every step and trifle! As soon as Anna was well Debo resumed her preparations. Caustically Anna commented: "I've never known Debo so energetic as she is in her efforts to reach London!"

Debo was worried about booking a proper steamer berth, about securing her passport in time for sailing, about this and that and another thing. At last the passport came and a berth was reserved. She was to sail on a Thursday late in June, chaperoned by a Mrs. Cotton. Whistler was leaving for the railroad line the day before. He embraced his daughter firmly: "Be a good girl and write me often."

And he rode away in a cloud of dust.

Yet, on the following day, Debo did not depart. For on Wednesday afternoon, several hours after Whistler had left, an unexpected guest arrived from abroad—George!

The family had expected George to arrive in August or later. Letters were due from him, and Whistler had given Anna the forwarding addresses along the construction line, but instead the young man himself appeared. In twenty-four hours Debo would have been gone to England. Anna saw God's hand: "The thought has more than once occurred to me that dear George was sent here and Debo detained at home for a mother's blessing."

Feel what they might, she stubbornly called herself their mother.

Of course, her health was sound, and many years seemed to be ahead of her, but she was expecting a baby, and since she was no longer a young woman anything might happen.

Debo canceled her ticket. In great joy she took George for a stroll up Nevsky Prospect, to show this wondrous city of palaces, to talk of America. This was June the twenty-fifth, and George had left Boston on the first; were these not times of speed almost supernatural? Anna was thinking of the same marvel as tremblingly she took up the letters brought from the States by her

stepson: "How very sudden the transition must appear to our George."

After tea the traveler came to sit by Anna's couch and talk of Stonington and Brooklyn until she could well-nigh fancy herself back home. Jimmie returned from a two-hour lesson at the Academy to whoop with startled frenzy at the sight of George. Willie was dancing beside them. A pity that Whistler was to be on the road a full fortnight yet!

III

Two months passed, here was late August already, but the child was not born yet. Anna feared death and tried to cover up the feeling with the thin blanket of ceaseless prayers. Gloomily she thought of what might happen to Jimmie and Willie were she to die in this childbirth. Placing the volume tenderly close to her disproportioned belly, she read James's *Anxious Enquirer* and marveled at the force of the saintly author's arguments, but oh how sad it was that her dear husband and children did not comprehend either her or God! Pain would angrily pierce the body, compelling her to clutch the book or close her diary. The spasm would ease, and she would look through the window into the court: "My nerves are weak surely, for why should I weep as I gaze on my precious Debo?"

Precious Debo, so graceful in her riding habit, was coming in on horseback through the archway in company with the Ropeses, and all of them were laughing and happy. "But," explained Anna, "the *future* for that daughter presses heavily upon my heart if she should soon be left motherless!"

IV

Her fears were groundless. On Friday the twenty-ninth of August, 1845, at about half-past one o'clock in the morning, the Whistlers' baby was born.

They named him John Bouttatz Whistler. Anna said that the baby might never see his namesake, for Colonel Bouttatz was

thousands of versts away, inspecting the Tsar's mines near the borders of China. She was a truer prophet than she then knew.

Our little Russian boy, they said, and although George said he had wanted another sister, Jimmie and Willie declared that a baby brother was just what they had wanted. Tatiana, the nurse, kept the baby in a small trough, as was Russia's quaint custom, at intervals bringing the crying bundle to Anna. In eight days Tatiana was gone, another family claiming her services. By then Anna was strong enough to have the pleasure of bathing and dressing the baby every morning. When the boy was two weeks old, the Whistlers held the ceremony of baptism.

Dr. Law officiated, their American friends were present, and the domestics gathered, all drinking the baby's health and tasting of the rich cakes. There they were, crowding forth however timidly: Mary, the Irish nurse; Johann, the German footman; Maria, the Finnish cook; Christina, the laundress; Dunia, the housemaid; and behind them, other, less presentable servants—janitors and porters and errand boys. Nurse Mary brushed tears away, at the memory of Charlie.

V

Whistler said that George's stay in St. Petersburg was of the greatest comfort to the family, but that all of them were sure Russia was not the country for him. Light-hearted as ever, sated with the brief stay in the exotic land, George accepted the verdict with no argument and made ready to sail before the frightful Russian winter would set in.

It was then that Debo recalled that she had been about to leave for England when George's arrival had stopped her. Her health—the family must not forget her health. So determined was she to go with George that Anna knew it would be useless trying to halt her. It was but a partial relief when Alicia announced she would take the girl to England.

Early in September the three embarked for Hull on the *Rob Roy*. Whistler took Jimmie and Willie to Cronstadt to see the travelers off, and, when they returned, the tea-table circle was

depleted and funereally drawn-faced. The Major in particular did not look well. He had spent some sleepless nights, dreading separation from Debo, and now it had come. Hen-like, Anna tried to cluck her sympathy, but all she managed was the old flat-tasting request that he cast his care upon God. Somehow he took this farewell harder than the one a few months before. Then it had seemed but a temporary parting, now it was a lasting ache in his life. Well, he had his boys with him.

Whistler looked across the table at Willie and Jimmie, and worriedly bethought himself of the problem that these two constituted. Anna—she who disliked Russia but loved its discipline—had been complaining that their boys' wild behavior was especially noticeable when compared with the manner of Russian boys who, she said, were drilled from infancy to politeness and submission. Something must be done about Jem and Willie.

And so a tutor was engaged. He was a sallow, thin-faced, middle-aged German with a French name of Monsieur Lamartine. For the two previous years he had lived with the family of Chevkin, the railroad General. Anna frowned at the thought of heading the table on that day in mid-September when the man first joined the Whistlers: the Major was away at the American works, and she spoke no foreign tongue. Also, there was that near-forgotten feud which General Chevkin had at one time carried on against Whistler. Was it wise of the Major to engage a man who had been tutor to his foe's children? Would there not be tales carried back to the General's house? How strangely trusting Whistler was!

For the present, however, there was no way out. Steeling herself to the duty, Anna went forth to welcome the tutor, and he responded with utmost civility, kissing her hand. She was relieved when all were seated and when the boys, addressing the newcomer in French, began to chat with complete freedom. Some of the talk she could understand. Humorously she thought that it was difficult to determine who of the two, Jimmie or the monsieur, was the greater and faster talker.

Within a few weeks she grew accustomed to the tutor. The routine of the day was soon established and seldom varied. Pre-

cisely at noon Johann interrupted the boys' French reading of Roman history by taking to the schoolroom a light snack: a cup of soup for the teacher, and a boiled egg for each of the boys. At half after one, the trio went out for a walk. Great was the stress on Monsieur Lamartine's patience as he and his charges strode through the streets, and long was the time before he could hope to tame Willie of some of the contrariety that had lately come into the boy. As for the unruly Jimmie, the outlook appeared quite hopeless.

VI

There was an American nursery chant which imitated a puffing locomotive: "I think I can—I think I can—I think I can!"

In Russia, too, the locomotive knew the tune. In September, 1845, Kleinmichel once more tried to inform himself as to the progress of rolling-stock manufacture, and in consequence issued to his department a naïvely appreciative order-bulletin:

"Work in the shops of Alexandrovsky is being carried out successfully. The bodies of locomotives and iron-trucks are superbly good and even graceful."

Whistler found that by autumn-time the American works turned out a locomotive a week and ten cars a day. Not counting unskilled labor, there were by then sixteen hundred mechanics employed in the shops. A small branch road, connecting the shops with the future line, had been recently completed. One mile and a half long, it was sufficient to try out new engines.

The establishment at Alexandrovsky was a source of sharp anxiety to Whistler, for the Tsar and Kleinmichel gave him unlimited leeway with regard to it. Neither they nor any of their aides questioned the quality of the engines and cars, leaving it all to Whistler's say-so. With much relief he repeated that fortunately, in Harrison, Eastwick, and the Winans brothers, he had persons entirely competent to manage such a concern.

He feared errors. Were they to happen in such a land as Russia the damage would be irreparable, he felt. When early in the fall

a fire broke out in the shops, he was on the scene as soon as the fastest carriage could bring him, and took charge instantly. The fire was put out, and within three weeks all was rebuilt and replaced and in full operation. As a matter of proud fact, at no time since the fire had there been any interruption of the regular weekly production of the establishment.

In November, for the last time in 1845, the Major and the Count rode to Moscow. The line of earthwork was inspected with the usual military ado and formal circumstance. Everywhere Kleinmichel shouted:

"In the name of our Sire the Emperor I order you to finish this work!"

And he specified an impossible deadline.

At the roadside the Russian engineers stood stiff as if trying to reach with the crowns of their shakos some invisible ceiling, and yelled back slavishly:

"Exactly so, Your Excellency!"

Nevertheless, it was evident that Kleinmichel found matters satisfactory. Something like one-half of the earthwork had been completed. At bridges and stations, many foundations and much masonry were being laid. Whistler still thought that the railroad would be ready by 1848.

The short fall was definitely over, and winter threatened its deadly advent. Work would be suspended until spring. Once more the American was heavy-hearted. Birds were on the wing, south-bound. About the middle of November a few pieces of ice came floating down the broad Neva from Lake Ladoga. The boat bridge was as usual removed, but it was a false alarm, for on the next day all ice disappeared, and from that time till the middle of December there was neither ice nor frost.

Clouds crept through the first part of December, and the Whistlers' windows wept with rain. Officers and couriers in water-soaked coats and muddy boots brought news which proved equally unpleasant.

Serfs, returning from Whistler's line to their far-off villages, were exceedingly weak from labor, hunger, and ills. Dragging themselves through the provinces of Moscow, Tver, and St.

Petersburg, they often fell and died. Local peasants would at first lift some of the stragglers, take them indoors, nurse and otherwise aid them. Soon it was reported that the good samaritans themselves succumbed to the diseases brought from the line. An epidemic—a whole range of epidemics—was raging.

Many of the serfs, thus wandering, thus dying, had their families with them. They belonged not to individual landlords but to the Tsar's treasury. These state-owned peasants had heard of the railroad, and had walked hundreds of miles in the hope of work and food, but it was too late in the season, and so they and their wives and children had to trek back, starving, ill, dying. Huts along their route were like a chain of makeshift sickrooms and morgues. On foul straw lay swollen, horrible bodies. Healthy people, before entering and breathing the air, had to sprinkle vinegar and smoke juniper around them as a protective screen. More priests than physicians were sent by the authorities to these places. The priests received confessions and administered last sacraments; for the serfs had souls, which of course had to be saved.

Thus closed the work season of 1845 on Whistler's line.

On the thirteenth of December, ice came down again from the lake. On the morrow the Neva stood still—an unusually late time for it to be frozen, the natives said. Days dawned when the cold was from ten to sixteen degrees by the Russian reckoning, which was from five to nine below zero by Fahrenheit.

This winter, the men and women of the capital seemed quieter than in previous years, and when Whistler looked for the reason he learned that the Emperor and his family had been abroad for three months. Among other countries Nicholas had visited England where he was feted by society and again abused by *Punch*. The Tsar was expected back in the middle of January, but the Tsarina and her court were to stay in Italy until summer.

Whistler felt badly about this constant traveling of the Romanovs and their retinue: the money expended by the luxurious gadding-about would have speeded up the railroad job. And the faster the work would have progressed, the sooner the Major and his brood might quit this savage land.

VII

There were two Christmases, old and new style, twelve days apart. Anna barred amusements and presents during the American Christmas, which, being of the new-style calendar, came first. Jimmie and Willie were in a rebellious mood, especially when Nurse Mary teased them by putting into their eagerly hung stockings such cruel things as a bit of string and an old end of a stearine candle. Anna, too, was out of sorts, but for a reason of her own: she did not like certain passages in Dr. Law's holiday sermon, and she winced at the sight of his scarlet robes and cap: "Too high church for us simple republicans."

Spirits improved all around shortly before the Russian Christmas. True, Jimmie could not go out because of a cold, but he foretasted parties in their own house. Good-humoredly he saw Willie off to a particularly promising party by counseling him to pocket as many sweetmeats as he could. Anna was horrified, and tried to instruct Willie to the contrary, but the boy returned laden with spoils, and Anna was helpless, for here she was against the blandly smiling stonewall of the Russian custom, according to which the hosts pressed bonbons and pastries upon their guests at parting, and no one would think of withstanding the pleasantries and thus offending the generous folk.

And now came the time of exchanging gifts within the Whistler circle. This was done in a mood of jollity. At breakfast time on the Russian Christmas day, Anna pretended that a household duty was calling her to the corridor. She soon came back, stealing softly behind Whistler. The boys laughed out merrily, and their startled father looked up to see an open umbrella over his head—Anna's gift. Jimmie's present to Father was a tobacco box which all of them judged to be a completely Russian thing. In return, Whistler flourished a golden watch toward the delighted Jimmie and an instructive device in Willie's direction—a costly game called the Gallery of Versailles. There were also caps for the boys, very becoming indeed, of maroon velvet. For himself, at the same Gostiny Dvor, Whistler had selected a polka dot cap, and the boys

applauded it as a gay one, asking: Did it not put him into a dancing feeling?

Then came the turn of the bowing, smiling servants. Pies and sweetmeats were handed to them as they trooped into the drawing room. The coacher received a three-ruble note, which he fervently promised to send to his wife, a serf employed in Moscow. The servantwomen ah'ed and oh'ed over the new rustling dresses, and would in appreciation kiss Whistler's hand.

A peasant from the Drury manor had brought an evergreen for the Whistlers' Christmas tree. While Jimmie and Willie were at a party given by the Harrisons for their little boy and some thirty children, the tree in the Whistler house was decorated in much hurry. Johann fastened a wax taper to every twig, and Lamartine was busy with the bonbons. At last, all was ready: the lights winked impishly, grapes weighted the boughs, sugar roses tempted the eye, and berries and currants from the capital's hot-houses dotted the greenery.

VIII

From George there was a letter describing his stormy crossing on the *Great Britain* to New York. There were later tidings, too: since war-talk was so insistent, George thought of joining the navy, but changed his mind and entered the service of Ross Winans in Baltimore. Whistler was glad. A job with old Winans was better for George than either the Russian railroad or the American navy. Perhaps now the lad would stay put, growing to his belated manhood and sober responsibility.

No such hope could be had for Mac. Whistler wrote to Anna's brother but there was no answer. Too deep in his cups and bitterness! The Swifts were brutally cold about Mac; William Swift felt McNeill was done for, and Whistler should not bother too much—what could be expected of a man with an unconquerable passion for drink? Mac was rapidly destroying his own life. Reformation was out of the question.

Whistler was sad. If only Mac had got himself a job. With a war or two coming, there should be no dearth of employment for a military man.

News came to Whistler that, indeed, late in September of that year Mac was in Washington to offer his services and a brigade of young men. They would fight the Mexicans under either Scott or Taylor. They would hold Texas for Polk. But the President bluntly turned down the offer. Discouraged, looking bad, feeling and talking as one irretrievably lost, Mac proceeded to Baltimore where he noisily demanded money from a canal company in settlement of an old claim. He still kept an eye on Washington; should there be a war not only with Mexico but with England as well, Polk would have to accept him as an officer.

War with England! The Oregon knot seemed to be coming to a bloody solution. A mad race was on, and the locomotive was to be America's vehicle to the disputed territory: in this year of 1845 Asa Whitney, the merchant of New York who had made a fortune in China trade, presented to the Twenty-Eighth Congress a memorial praying for a grant of land to build a railroad from Lake Michigan to the Oregon coast. And there was also the problem of Texas. The British wanted Texas even more than Oregon.

War with England—Whistler was worried when he heard such talk. The English were a crafty, treacherous people, Anna's opinion to the contrary. On December 19, 1845, he wrote to Joseph Swift:

"They are no better prepared for war than we are. Nor are they any more anxious for it than we are. If we ever do have a war, it will be not for Oregon but because they want a cotton country independent of us. They want Texas. And if they cannot trade for it they may find a pretext to fight for it. It is not the first time they have done such things. Open plunder is not so respectable as it used to be, but England is very expert from much practice in getting up a pretext."

But how much holier were the Americans' claims and tactics? If such men as Duff Green were busy in the Western backyard prowling around for Mexican loot and, in the process, involving the United States government, could the Yankees hold themselves upright while accusing Britons?

Whistler was honest. No, he said, they could not.

Chapter Twenty-Two

JANUARY of 1846 was one long unyielding frost, till the Whistlers became accustomed to an existence which seemed little short of arctic. February brought no easement, and they repeated the old adage: "As the days lengthen, the colds strengthen."

Then came the thaw, and with it the usual Butter Week of high humor to the natives and roughshod chafe to Anna. In Admiralty and Alexander Squares all the places of amusement were thronged. One day, as Anna and the boys drove home from a shopping excursion to Nevsky Prospect, their progress was clogged when the sleigh ran into the crowds.

Suddenly they were in the midst of this holiday scene, this pageant of the ice hills in the center with sledges in furious downward rush, the gaily painted pavilions with swings or boats-on-wheels or cars on a circular railway, and the theaters with their tawdry signs. In front of the delayed Americans a half-dozen circus riders were showing off their horsemanship, trying to entice the multitude to pay and enter. Jimmie was enormously tempted, and wondered aloud how it was that his mother could resist such an invitation, but Anna said: "The spectacle for us is outside."

She explained to the boys that this loose-spirited tapestry of Russians at their merrymaking was painful to reflective minds. True, the boys might watch it awhile from the outside as something instructive to tell later to their American cousins, but not from the inside, oh no!

How little, however, could they see and hear by remaining outside. Famous were the harlequinades of old Russia's Butter Week and Eastertime; in the 1840s they reached a level of art and humor unexcelled before or since. The audiences of the show booths were made up largely of two groups: children of the well-to-do, and the adults of the lower classes; the Italian heroes of those plays—Harlequin, Cassandra, Pierrot, Colombina—became household words in the nursery of the mansion as well as in the

hovel of the slums. The swings were also a strong attraction. These revolved on horizontal axles, high above the crowds. Couples, tenderly embracing; women, squealing with delight and risk; children, shouting with joy; all clung and whirled, all waved and yelled to those remaining below. But the carousel was by far the prime favorite. It was built on an elevation fenced in by railings upon which the Carousel Grandpa appeared periodically to harangue the throng. He was an actor, of course; his hair and beard were make-believe, of flax; his shoes were of peasant-bast. He leered and sneered; he spoke in rhymes and jests, and many of his words and gestures verged on rebellion. No censor of the Tsar ever attempted to clip such folk-actors' speech and manners, and so for years they remained the only ones in Russia who were allowed their free say. The carousel itself was a circle of little wooden boats or horses. Not only boys and youths but also bearded adults flew about astride the wooden mounts; as they rode, some played shrill notes on their squeaking pipes. A hurdy-gurdy ground hour after hour, and there was the added lure of women dancers, rouged and painted, dressed loudly and smelling of alcohol.

Briefly the Whistlers watched the scene. Look, said Anna to Jimmie and Willie, look and hear how at a signal everything was set in motion together, and the poor ignorant Russians fancied themselves happy while they chanted their own strange measures, and witness also how these police on their huge black horses were surrounding the crowds—to remind them that they must keep their mirth within bounds.

Through the week's hilarious course Jimmie and Willie were sad. The Eastwicks came from Alexandrovsky to take the Whistler boys to the swings, but the Major looked at Anna and said, "No." Anna was relieved. It was so nobly unselfish of her husband to sacrifice his enjoyment of the boys' pleasure for the sake of their eternal salvation. Ah, her good Whistler!

Yet, beneath the meekness, Whistler felt guilty. He really must do something for the boys' diversion, something that would not offend Anna. He had it! The Children's Theater with its puppets was not a sinful matter. The next noon the happy boys went off.

They were back by three o'clock, and at once Willie re-enacted the show for his mother. He took all the puppets' parts, he sang and danced, he described the stage and scenery.

"Oh Mother, it all looked so grand I was afraid *real* people would come out to act, and then I knew we ought not stay as you don't approve of any but puppets' acting!"

Jimmie, too, was in ecstasies as he told his mother of the dissolving views that had closed the puppet show. Mary duly reported that after the show, as their sleigh had cut across the unseemly Square, the boys had told her how glad they were of their father's prohibition against going into that filthy crowd.

Anna was all radiance. Now that the boys' souls were safe, she went around looking after the servants' morals. She remembered that the boys had each presented Dunia the maid with a half-ruble in silver. Had she gone to the swings with the money? Thank heaven, she had not. Dunia had spent the ruble on those delectable colonial wares, coffee and sugar, a quiet pleasure, indeed, a far and virtuous cry from the immoral swinging or the lewd listening to the Carousel Grandpa.

But Anna was too late in reaching the coachman's soul. He, the only one in the household, had heeded the bacchanal hallo of the Square: he had gone away without leave or license, and was now airily drunk.

II

They would not have been the Whistlers if they had not been interminably and spasmodically ill. During the winter the Major often dieted to get rid of his colds and various indispositions. When the pain of his attacks was too excruciating, Anna stood ready with warm poultices. Her hands were full in the nursery as well: the first six months of his life Johnnie was cooped up in the house with no fresh air to bolster his growth, and Anna feared for the baby's health. The backstairs were unheated, there were constant drafts, and Johnnie had to be bundled up when taken from room to room across those stairs. In the spring, teething came to torment the baby, and Anna lost sleep. To irritate her came

Debo's letters describing the first signs of the English spring: violets and crocuses already opening, and the girl walking miles with no fatigue. Anna was glum: "How good her advantages . . ." Debo also wrote that the Maingays wished her to stay with them, and so she wanted to remain in England a few months more. Anna sulked: was it godly for the girl to stay away from Russia? "I will not dread bringing her back to the unwholesome atmosphere of this city founded on a bog—for He had ordered our sojourn in it."

In early March the city was a frightful mess, a fortnight's thaw ruining all streets. And if St. Petersburg swam in this sea of mud, what of the hundreds of miles between here and Moscow? To think that in such weather Whistler had to ride the long marshy stretch to the old capital and back!

On this inspection tour Whistler was accompanied by one of the Winanses and a Russian captain of engineers. Whistler did not feel well, but found the traveling not as miry as Anna had feared for him. He went the entire distance to Moscow; a Sunday brought Anna to his mind, and he went to church: she would be glad to hear of it when he came back to St. Petersburg. She would be, on the other hand, grieved to receive back the canister of cakes which she had given him for the Russian officers along the construction line as gifts in return for the hospitality with which they greeted him, so often. He smiled despite himself: butter! Butter in the cakes condemned the gift in the Russians' eyes—for this was Lent time.

The inspectors returned over the grand road, past the hundreds of serfs who labored to keep it from sinking in slush and mud—the Emperor was expected to pass this way soon. Whistler came home when least expected, late at night. Rumped but bright-eyed he brought two guns, one for each boy, and Johann was to teach their use.

To keep the boys from too much shooting and shouting, Anna made them listen to a volume on a Scottish mission to the Jews, a most delightful book, she reminded Jimmie and Willie when she caught them at inattention. Jimmie longed for other books

and eagerly awaited every mail from the States. But each time the American gifts had to be coaxed out of the customs house; foreign books were held by the Russian censors for many weeks, and Jimmie was sarcastic: "They read every volume that goes there—they must be well informed on universal history!"

III

That March, Jimmie was examined at the Academy and passed first in his class. Late in April of 1846 and early in May the Triennial Exhibition was held at the Academy, and both boys went to see it practically every day of the week. Jimmie loved a boy's portrait said to be his likeness: the eyes were blacker and the curls darker than Jimmie's, but oh what a smart white shirt with crimped frill, open at the throat!

At home the Major proudly watched Jimmie's drawing. His face seemed younger as he bent over the boy's shoulder to look at the sketches. His own half-forgotten knowledge of the art began to re-awaken. A Swede once came to the house requesting permission to display his skill as portrait painter. The American told him to try his hand at the boys' likenesses, but when the portraits were ready Whistler's blood was up: these were rank caricatures, and yet the man had the impudence to ask thirty-five rubles for his work! Whistler could only throw the pictures into the fire. On the other hand, to prove his high regard for the Academy and its men, he gave Koritsky a commission to paint a sketch of Johnnie as the baby rode around the parlor in his little carriage, and the portrait was fast emerging in the best imitation of Brullov's dullness. On occasion, despite the cold wind or clawing dust or 'flu-burdened rain, Whistler took the entire family to see an exhibition at the Academy.

Here they come, slowly advancing through the gallery which is so crowded because the paintings have been highly extolled. Certain marine pieces by Russian artists attract most visitors, and the Whistlers stop too. They see views of Constantinople, Odessa, Cronstadt and other ports, the sun gilding the waters enticingly—

as if to seduce the Russians into increased competition with the seafaring Britons, the moonbeams playing upon other waves delightfully—as if foretelling the glories of future Slav dominance over the Near East. One canvas shows Peter the Great standing on a craggy coast with a few trusted peasants holding torches, while a fire is blazing near by on the cliffs as if to warn the fleet in the storm to keep away from the dangerous shore. The Whistlers think that the light thrown amid the night upon the figures is wonderful; they are impressed by the news that Tsar Nicholas himself has bought the painting, paying four thousand silver rubles. A handsome price, all agree. Anna thinks of Jimmie. Perhaps her boy is due for a profitable career as an artist. Perhaps he should be an artist instead of a preacher. After all, he could keep himself to religious themes.

Anna moves a few paces to stare at a large canvas by Brullov, *The Serpent in the Wilderness*. Those countenances ethereal with Faith—she could never tire looking at them! In scorn she now and then steals glances at those visitors who pass the painting without stopping, without taking this opportunity to be saved through art.

She feels so elevated that she looks at Russia's homely scenes with something approaching benevolence. Some of these scenes, she remarks to Whistler, some of these fields and forests and peasants and artisans are indeed faithfully portrayed.

"I should like," she pronounces in a mood of magnanimity, "I should like to take some of them to show in my native land."

No higher compliment can there be, certainly.

IV

The summer of 1846 came with a sudden impact, spilling its bag of tricks all at once. Days grew sultry, and the city perceptibly emptied of its idle rich. Instead, by the first of June, thousands of serfs came from the interior—carpenters and tinsmiths, masons and bricklayers, plasterers and painters, tramping in singly or as primitive communes of artels. For there was the Russian custom

of renovating in the early summer what the severe winter peeled or ruined. The mighty legion labored through the sun-baked weeks to replace the heads or arms lost by statues in the past winds of the Gulf, to refurbish the walls discolored by rains and snows, and to whitewash the ceilings smoked by the goose-fat lamps and tallow candles.

It seemed as if this summer the Whistlers were the only Americans left in town. Of their friends, the William Ropeses moved out to the Gellibrand dacha, while Mrs. Harrison had ailed and fainted throughout the winter so often that her husband sent her off to England. Debo was not returning until fall. She was having a will of her own, writing that her health was better but that a stuffy Russian summer would undo the improvement. So convincing was her argument that Whistler conceded it, and Anna, though irritated at his surrender, found it best to keep up the appearance of peace.

In a desultory fashion Anna was thinking now of going to England, now of a dacha on the Peterhof road, but ended by staying in the city. The Russian summer was so brief, she said. Whistler, after watching the serf-artisans, decided to fall in with the custom. Three artels of men were hired for the house on the Quay: one group to color the walls, another to wax the parquet floors, the third one to repair the stoves. Since the Major was seldom home, Anna had to supervise the serfs. The men sang as they hammered and pounded, tinkered and daubed. Jimmie and Willie liked the bedlam, amid which Anna's disciplining fell like empty words. There was for them the added distraction of this summer's fetes and processions.

The trumpet-tongued series was to open on June the nineteenth when, after her winter in Italy, the Empress would be welcomed back to the capital. A grand service would be held in the Kazansky Cathedral, crimson carpets would be spread for the Tsarina to tread from the equipage to the church and back, crowds would gather to see her. Long beforehand Jimmie and Willie eagerly discussed the promised illumination of the city. Anna listened, thinking: "Young people like glare."

She allowed Mary and Dunia brief leave to see the lights and crowds. When evening came Willie was sent off to bed despite his wails, but at ten-thirty Jimmie was so impatient that Anna yielded to the elder boy.

Together, mother and son set out in a carriage for a view of Nevsky Prospect. As a rule, there could be nothing scantier than Russian illumination: it consisted of flames fluttering in cups of oil or grease spaced along the pavement, and even this weak attempt at flare was over by an early hour. On this occasion, however, the Russians did better. Or rather, Tsar Nicholas wanted to prove to his subjects that Nelidova and his other mistresses did not really matter, that he loved the Empress amid his infidelities. Initials of the royal pair blazed forth in crowns, wreaths, and chaplets. The lights turned from the Island toward the English Quay were brilliant beyond tale. As Anna and Jimmie drove along the Quay they admired also the flowers and ornaments on the pillared mansions.

Their carriage had to find a moving groove in the line of vehicles crowding one side of St. Isaac's Square. Just then a shout from the crowds told Anna and Jimmie of the Tsarina's approach. Two huge Cossack footmen towered above the regal procession, and the carriage bore swiftly through the throng. Other carriages, those of the entourage, rolled behind at the same smart clip. Anna was terrified. The poles of these vehicles would run straight into their backs! A frightened horse might bite her or Jimmie!

Jimmie's laughter at her timidity rang out in bold peals. He behaved like a man, she later told her friends. With one arm guarding his mother, with the other he kept the nearest animals at a due distance. Her dear, her manly boy!

And soon there was yet another evidence of Jimmie's calm in a crisis. On a day of festivities at Peterhof, Anna gave Nurse Mary and a girl friend of hers, a saleswoman in a foreign store, permission to take the boys to the gardens in the family carriage. Near the famed fountains some gay officers made a beeline for the two pretty foreigners. Mary was in a near-panic, for these could not be gentlemen of principle, but Jimmie adroitly came to

the women's rescue by exchanging laughing remarks with the men, and so the party returned home safely.

V

July and August were overpoweringly hot. The hottest summer in years, said Russians. Close days were punctuated by violent thunderstorms, during which Anna whispered: "The elements rage as if God were speaking to us."

Despite the sultriness Jimmie went on with his drawing, even though Koritsky, perhaps indisposed by the weather, condemned the boy's latest picture of a dog. The two brothers cheered as steamers brought letters from the States at last announcing declaration of the Mexican war and General Taylor's victories. The American yard at Alexandrovsky remained a paradise, the most alluring place in all Russia, what with its fireworks, musket- and crossbow-shooting, and pony-riding. There was a bang-up Fourth of July at Alexandrovsky with the Eastwick boys, and Willie came home roaring in pain of his burned hand.

Occasionally all the Whistlers journeyed to the Gellibrand dacha and its pond and isle. Jimmie and Willie propelled themselves on the drawbridge to and from the isle; they swam and rowed; they ran wild, chasing butterflies with rowdy yells. Monsieur Lamartine was taking his vacation. That lazy dominie, Anna said.

Her thin patience was exhausted when one day the boys finally broke the drawbridge ropes, and thus marooned themselves on the island. It would have been good punishment for them to remain prisoners out there, but a good-natured dvornik swam to their rescue before she could stop him. Jimmie was brought back drenched to the skin, and Mrs. Ropes took him to her room to rub him dry, so that his throat would not break into customary soreness. Anna felt another medicine was needed: on discovering in a near-by barn a homeless German dying of tuberculosis, a pious man ready to meet his Maker, she hastened to send the boys to the fetid straw-bedside. They were to have a lesson in contentment and quiet behavior by comparing their lot with his.

VI

Past the Gellibrand dacha, equipages without number rumbled in the direction of Peterhof. The fiftieth birthday of Tsar Nicholas was celebrated early in July, also the betrothal of his daughter Olga to the Prince of Württemberg, and later in the month her birthday.

Thousands of people were hastening to Peterhof to see the illumination of the famed gardens. Court carriages raced by, with footmen and other attendants in scarlet liveries. Diplomats rode in their coaches, the outriders sporting green feathers in the cocked hats. Ambassadors, noblemen, and merchants had their mattresses and food boxes with them, for the festivals were to last more than one day. Fire companies whisked by in clangor, armed with hose to water the Peterhof gardens. Anna remarked querulously that it would have been very nice had these helmeted men used their hose on the *chaussée*, to lay the choking dust raised by all these troops and travelers.

On the day of the betrothal, Jimmie and Willie listened for the first gun boom: a salute of thirty cannon was to be fired in St. Petersburg at the exact moment of the exchange of rings, just as the Empress was to pass them between the pair. But how would the soldiers in the capital know when to fire? It was here that the Russians of the Tsar would use the wonderful invention of telegraph. In fact, in St. Petersburg and vicinity the novel magic of stuttering wires was used every five minutes to advise the court and the generals of the Romanovs' least step.

Yet, while the official phrases informed Russia of the Romanovs' virtues, and of the ceremonies in which the virtues were celebrated, the subjects had their own telegraph—of grapevine, of merciless rumors. This July, strange tales were whispered by the Russians about Grand Duchess Olga and her marriage. She, like her eldest sister Maria, had been in love now with one young guardsman, now with another. The Tsar would stop before nothing to satisfy his own flesh, but his daughters must remain pure as this land's snow. He had punished Maria's lover, a Russian prince,

and now the rumor had it that Olga had given her chastity to the same young blade, and this was why shortly before the July festivities he had found himself on the way to the battles of the Caucasus for the second and final time.

Olga was to be married to Karl Friedrich Alexander, the heir to the throne of Württemberg. Her father believed in marrying off his girls to German princes as firmly as he trusted in surrounding his throne with German barons: "Russian nobles serve the state, but the German nobles serve us Romanovs."

On another occasion Tsar Nicholas I said:

"In the Germanies there is orderliness and strict, unconditional lawfulness. Nothing is tainted with either cleverness or contrariness. No one gives orders before he himself learns to obey. Without a lawful reason no one gets ahead of another. Everything is subject to a single definite aim, and everything has its purpose. That is why I feel at home among those people."

It was fortunate that the Germanies had so many idle princes and princesses to marry the Tsar's numerous kin. He would not be deterred even by the well-substantiated charge that his latest choice, this future king of Württemberg coming to wed the Tsar's daughter, was an addict to sodomy.

Olga submitted. And so, close to two hundred thousand people flocked to the Gulf shores and the pretty fountains.

VII

This summer, work on Whistler's road did not progress as well as he had expected it to: at first there was a series of illnesses among the serfs, almost an epidemic, and this abated only toward the middle of June. Forty thousand men labored on the railroad by mid-July, but Whistler needed ten thousand more. Yet precisely this number of serfs was diverted from his camps to tend the military carts and tents for the wedding. Movement of material toward Whistler's line was disrupted by the tramp of the Tsar's troops going to and from the marriage-time parades. All the world in Russia, railroad makers included, had to be occupied with the great show of the royal marriage. On the single day of

July the thirteenth—the date of the main ceremony—as much money was spent as would have made a good portion of the railroad. So said Whistler, dolefully though not bitterly.

No, not bitterly. An interesting occasion, he sighed with a temporary resignation. Think of the pageant! And so he prevailed upon Anna to join their family to the American party bound for Peterhof.

The Whistlers, the Harrisons, the Eastwicks, and several other Yankees came to gaze at these dazzling avenues and gates of millions of lamps, these colored lanterns in the shape of fruits and flowers; to listen to the many bands of music; to jostle and be jostled in the immense crowd. A curiously mixed throng it was: ladies rustled in the costliest dresses of satin, gauze, and silver; Finnish peasant girls moved slowly in their odd finery made on village looms and hand-hewn embroidery frames; and, of course, the omnipresent sheepskins, no matter how old or greasy, rubbed against the gold lace with no visible fear or respect. For this was one of the rare occasions on which the Tsar's poorest subjects were permitted to mingle freely with the rest of the populace. Anna was intrigued by the sight of the Finnish men and women: "So much like American Indians!"

Suddenly she shuddered: a mouzhik's coarse beard was pressed by the crowd close to her cheek, his breath of vodka and onions sickening her very soul. She let out a desperate cry. Elbowing the way, Whistler extricated his group to a spot of fewer people and purer air. Presently they found rows of stalls, at which refreshments were served, of all grades to all classes. The Americans stopped at a tea dispensary.

VIII

The colony had its sporadic additions. Thus an American dentist, Dr. Edward Maynard, came from Paris to take care of the Tsar's teeth. He was the inventor of gold-foil fillings. Nicholas may have respected him also because the dentist was at the same time an ingenious tinkerer with rifles. Soon Dr. Maynard sported

the ribbon of St. Andrew, one of the highest decorations the Tsar ever bestowed.

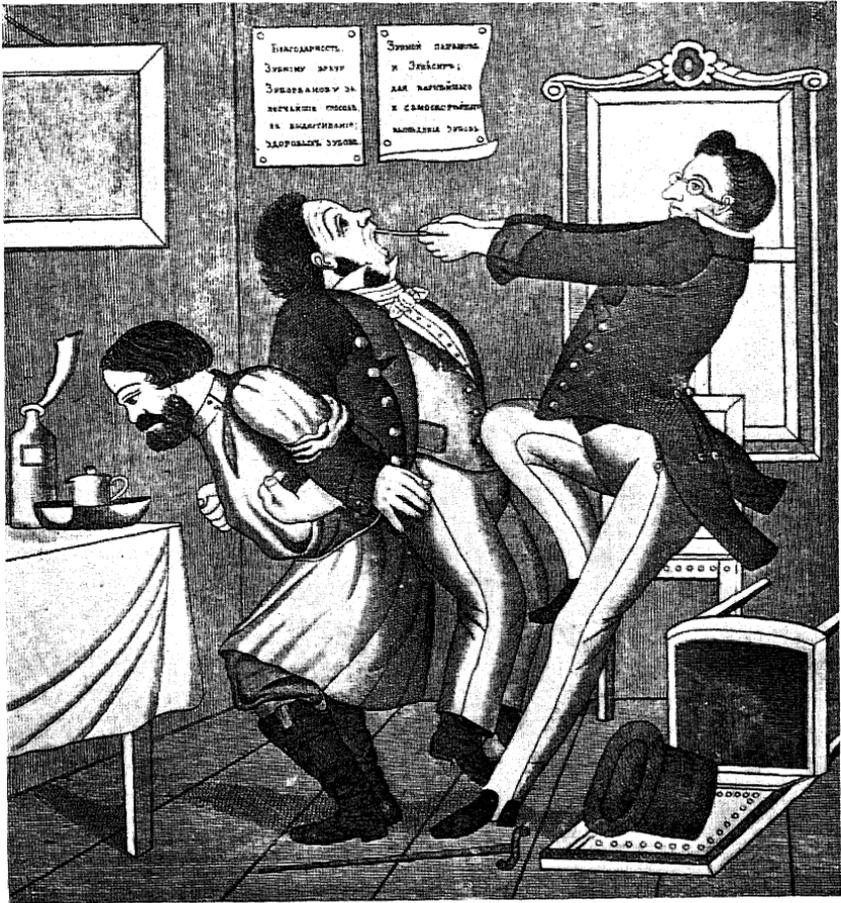
The Whistlers' teeth had been giving trouble, and they paid several visits to the famous compatriot. He almost charmed away their dread of a dentist's chair—such gentle skill was his, even in the fearful operation of extracting several teeth at a sitting. Later, Dr. Maynard came to dine at the Whistlers'. These weeks Anna laid a particularly good table: codfish brought from Archangel, frozen yet delicate of taste; mince pies of American model and flavor; and a drink no less chastely American—cider presented to the Whistlers by the Gellibrands.

A party of American clergymen were touring Europe, interviewing statesmen and crowned heads in the cause of temperance. Reaching St. Petersburg, they stopped in the neat and restful boardinghouse kept by a Mrs. Wilson in Galernaya, and made acquaintance of the pious among the English-speaking of the capital. They preached in the church and the chapel, and one of the divines went to Alexandrovsky where, before an overflowing audience of American engineers and mechanics, he spoke of the invisible hand which had brought all of them far from their native shores that they might show true religion to the Russians. Anna cried out fervent amens, tears of joy in her eyes.

She brought the travelers to one of her best-cooked dinners. The blessing upon the Whistler board was in the same strain as the sermon at Alexandrovsky: strangers in this foreign realm, you fellow Americans must realize the Providence which had led you to this table!

IX

At the mention of America, Whistler would be unmanned. He yearned to complete his work and return home. He tried to bring the rainbow's tip nearer by thinking that next year, in 1847, he might send the family to England, to await him there. The following year, in 1848, they would all return to America—to live quietly in Brooklyn near his dear friend Joseph Swift; he even wrote to the Swift brothers to be on the lookout for a house.



BEFORE AMERICAN METHODS OF DENTISTRY REACHED RUSSIA

From a folk-broadside of the period. A Russian dentist and his assistant at work. On the wall two notices make fun of the dentist's clumsiness: "Gratitude to the dentist, named Toothpuller, for the easiest method of pulling good teeth," and "Tooth-powder and elixir for the surest and quickest falling-out of teeth."



Top: The Russian way of teaching temperance: drunkards, after sleeping it off, are forced by the police to sweep the streets. Note the two ladies (most likely, ladies of joy).

Bottom: Frozen Provision Market in St. Petersburg (where Mrs. Whistler bought the ingredients for one of her best-cooked dinners served to the American clergymen visiting Russia to preach temperance).

Both pictures from Sears, *Illustrated Description of the Russian Empire*.

With a sharpening hunger he devoured all the news he could hear or read from or about the States. He was glad when President Polk settled with England the thorny Oregon question. It wasn't worth a war, Whistler thought. But the poor Mexicans, if they were only able, had just cause to war with the United States. "I trust we shall treat them in kindness," he said. "We can afford to do almost anything they wish to pacify them."

At this distance Whistler could not see the justice of his countrymen's quarrel with Mexico. The Yankees—he informed his friends in the States—were considered by all Europe as aggressors upon their weak neighbors, and he, Whistler, agreed with such point of view. The thought was not pleasant, he said. In his opinion the whole Texas affair was wrong. However—"If as conquerors we may act justly, the original sin may be lost sight of."

The sooner this war was terminated the better it would be for the Yankee name. The draperies of battle smoke would lift to reveal that Americans were not so bad as they were painted in Europe. The end of the war, as well as the settlement of the Oregon problem, would restore quiet and confidence at home and abroad, so that the United States might once more occupy its true position of honor among nations.

Chapter Twenty-Three

THE inefficiency of the natives was at last getting the better of Whistler. These Russians trying to build a railroad were like sprat sent out to catch a whale. So many laborers were diverted from the line to other, wasteful tasks. So much money was stolen or thrown to the winds of court folly. Whistler saw that his former hope of finishing everything by 1848 was vain. The year 1849 had to be set as the more probable goal. Three more years . . .

And was this long Russian episode worth his while in the money made and saved? He now realized with a particular clarity that despite the handsome manner in which he was being rewarded his money affairs were not as prosperous as he could wish or as many might think.

Whistler did all he could in the way of economy. He said that his desires and expectations were never extravagant but that it cost so much to live in the Tsar's brilliant capital. Supposed to be among the most popular foreigners in Russia, he had to live up to the reputation, and so prevailed upon Anna to entertain. Anna, even if reluctant to play the hostess, loved to preside over the many servants, to send them around all day long with notes to friends and acquaintances. Servants and gifts cost money. It also took money to keep Debo in England and in frequent travel. George's deficits had to be made up. Appeasing Mac was a drain at all times—Mac, the enlarger of trifles, the sensitive drunkard who brooded over imaginary offenses.

Not much was left after all such bills were paid. Whistler said he would be quite content if he could return to America with enough funds to give him an annual income of one thousand dollars. Naturally, he was not an old man yet; he would add to this a little something from further professional employment as engineer in his native land.

His native land! He was as ever firmly resolved to return home once the Tsar's railroad was completed. No allurements would detain him in St. Petersburg.

II

Much of the job was already done. Half of the earthwork and many a bridge foundation greeted Whistler's eye.

Yet, even after the bridge piers had been laid, Kleinmichel continued to be crotchety about them, wasting time and labor. The granite was to be polished until it shone brightly! The bridge foundations were to be like so many mirrors! The engineers drove the serfs: "Polish! Polish!"

To a rare good-natured officer an equally rare bold-spoken serf would say: "Eh Master, why polish these stones so? The gentle-people who will ride on the railroad will not see them from up there, anyway."

But such were the Count's orders, and they had to be obeyed.

Whistler bit his lips in suppressed anger. Well, let them fool with such trifles if they wished. Increasingly the Major was occupied with the more important matters of superstructure—with stations and machinery.

In the summer of 1846 Kleinmichel issued the order:

"To finish and open the rail path from St. Petersburg to the works of Alexandrovsky. To begin thereon locomotive traffic under the immediate supervision of Engineer-Major Uistler."

The Major smiled at the pomposity with which Kleinmichel issued orders to finish and open jobs which had already been finished and opened. This branch road—why, most of its brief distance had been operating for several months now! Whistler could finish and open and operate anything and everything if only the money allotted to the work would not keep on disappearing so indecently in the pockets of Kleinmichel and the lesser officials, if only they would send enough men to the line, and if more and more rails—like these sturdy ones freshly arrived from Cardiff—would be ordered abroad.

The marriage-parades over, presently as many as sixty thousand workers swarmed in the human ant-heaps all along the line.

Foreseeing the increase, Kleinmichel early in the summer had ordered the expansion of the railroad gendarmerie to twice their former number.

The building of the great stations in the two capitals had been started two years before, but the smaller stations along the rest of the line had to wait. Now, in 1846, the remaining structures were being erected.

The larger of these were situated every seventy-five versts, and as their companions they had shops for locomotive repair. It was planned that at these stations the trains would stop longer than elsewhere, so as to give passengers an opportunity to buy and eat their dinners. Stations were built solidly, of stone and brick and cast iron. The arches were bold and proud-looking; galleries rested on iron pillars; platforms and overhead bridges for passengers were of granite. The buildings were of American models, yet a certain Slav or oriental touch was added to their architecture. The Russian nobles raised their eyes and craned their necks: "Grandiose!"

Whistler liked the structures, although he was critical of their brick. Russian brick was not much good, he felt. The situation was further aggravated by Kleinmichel's order for fine seams to be made in every bit of brickwork. The Count had pretensions at artistry, and would bear no argument that such seams made the brick too fragile for lasting service.

There was more sense to Kleinmichel's order that each station was to have an appendage of a garden. Alwart, a celebrated gardener of St. Petersburg, was engaged for this work. His fees were high, so that the transplanted poplars and other greenery came to cost close to a half-million rubles. Again there were bitter jokes and whispered complaints: "Why such expensive gardens? Why gardens at all?" Yet, thanks to the greenery, the station settlements were soon the prettiest oases in the barren countryside. On his next inspection tour Kleinmichel reviewed the poplars as he would his soldiers, and was satisfied.

The Count's memory was remarkable: in the back of his narrow mind he held every detail weighty or trifling, every old order of his or the Tsar's. He often used an idea past its natural life, in all

the limitations of its out-dated imitations. Thus each tour was a long-drawn-out affair, and once, in September, for five days Whistler had to stay in a wayside village waiting for the Count to be done and proceed. Such things were trying to an engineer; it took all of Whistler's effort not to fidget over wasted time or to lose his head along with time over such storms of Kleinmichel's rage as occurred when the inspectors reached the newly-built station of Spirovo.

At Spirovo it was plain that the Russian engineers and architects had disobeyed the Count's order—they had built a sturdy station house of coarse exterior with no fine seams in the brickwork. Kleinmichel roared: "What sort of brickwork is this? Smash it all! Rebuild at the expense of the guilty ones!"

And he was gone.

The expense of tearing down and rebuilding would have been considerable. The architects and engineers dared a deception. They brought the best artisans they could find to replaster and repaint the coarse exterior so skillfully that it would look like new brick; fine seams were then nicely and carefully painted in. The Russians were pale with fear of detection when the Count halted at Spirovo on his next trip.

He noticed nothing but the thin straight seams. Bubbling over with gratification and joy, he addressed Colonel Kraft: "I bow before you low! I'll send all the builders here to learn how to lay brick! All stations should be built like this!"

And now furniture for the waiting rooms had to be ordered. A German cabinetmaker, Hasse, supplied the Count's own house; naturally it was he who obtained the official business as well. Every time a new order had to be placed, Kleinmichel said to his aides: "Hasse? A very good man, indeed. But do bargain! Bargain by all means! Worry his price down, for he tries to be terribly expensive!"

Thus would the satrap try to cover up the well-known division of the excessive profits between himself and the contractor.

Samples of station furniture came. Kleinmichel halted to ask the official in charge: "And why are these divan arms upholstered?"

"So that, Your Excellency, travelers while waiting for their departure may lie down and rest their heads."

"Get pillows instead!"

"But pillows, Your Excellency, being unfastened from the divans, may easily be stolen."

"And what are you for? Stand watch, stand watch!"

III

Debo wrote that she had been to Scotland, described Loch Lomond with much rapture, and made vivid the grand ceremony she had witnessed of dedicating Sir Walter Scott's monument in the Prince's Street Gardens at Edinburgh.

It was more than a year since Debo left—high time for the girl to come home, Anna insisted. She went around gushing saccharine words of how she missed darling Debo.

In St. Petersburg, autumn was asserting its bleakness. A strong westerly wind ruffled the Neva, and its sound was stormy. Clouds of sticky dust rushed through the broad avenues, penetrating the cracks of every window and the crevices of every door. Withered leaves fell or flew in the air. The sky was gray; dark nights and dull days added to the greenless sadness.

Toward the end of September, Whistler took a steamer for Hamburg to meet Debo and bring her home. Watching from the balcony her husband's departure Anna said how welcome would this holiday be to Whistler, this three-week reprieve from his arduous duties on the railroad.

If not for the baby and the nurse Anna would have no one to speak to, for, the day before he left for Germany, Whistler had placed Jimmie and Willie in Monsieur Jourdan's boarding school. It was a measure of disciplining the boys, but Jimmie in his notes to Anna wrote that the school was first-rate. Native food appealed to him, especially at the start; he liked this brown bread and salt for breakfast, and kvas or sour beer for dinner. Willie sent paler and tamer letters, yet made brave not to write of his homesickness, which was crushing.

Anna missed them, but would not give in to the misery of it.

The family coachman no doubt considered her a hard-hearted mother when one day, while driving her for an airing, he halted the champing horses before Monsieur Jourdan's door, and in vain waited for her to alight.

"James! Willie!" he exclaimed, thinking that Mrs. Whistler did not perhaps realize to what entrance he had taken her.

Unflinchingly, she waved him on.

IV

On the first Saturday the door of the Whistler flat opened, and in rushed the boys, calling: "Mother! Mother!"

They were in a glow. The new round caps of black cloth were jauntily to one side of their cropped heads. The school uniforms of gray trousers, black jackets, and velvet stock were tight and trim. Both boys seemed taller and certainly straighter.

They told Anna all about the school, the teachers, and the mates. Willie soon romped off to the courtyard to ride about on Henry Eastwick's new pony, but Jimmie disdained such frolics. Koritsky would be here any minute now, and in fine anticipation Jimmie began to draw. He remembered the promise to improve he had given his father. He drew steadily for two hours. It argued well for Jem's determination, Anna remarked.

How marvelous in truth to have them back, even temporarily! How lovely to feed them wholesome un-Russian dinners and breakfasts, and at tea-time to see them devour curd and cream and good homemade bread and butter . . . to pray with them . . . to listen to their lively chatter of the school . . . to talk to them of their duty to God and schoolmates and masters!

As the time drew near to leave home once more, Willie clung to Anna with a mounting despair, with a frightened tenderness, and at last broke down. In the Sunday twilight he sobbed out the tale of his wretchedness at school. He had been homesick, he was so happy here, he dreaded going back to Jourdan's. At first she wept together with him, but Jimmie and Henry Harrison were getting ready to go. She must act.

"Will you let the boys go tonight without you?"

Her eyes were now dry, her words firm, but he, still sobbing, replied: "Oh no! It's *right* to go to school. Father wishes it, and I will try all I can to study to please him."

She sought out Jimmie, drew him aside, and began to lecture on his brother's claims upon his sympathy while both were thrown amid strangers. In her blindness she added: "You do not know what he feels."

It was Jimmie's turn to dissolve in tears: "Oh Mother, you think I don't mind being away from home!"

He quickly checked himself, hating to be seen in such an unmanly state. With the back of his hand he brushed away the unwelcome tears, and was on his way.

In the subsequent weeks he was to cry once more. It was on a Saturday when the masters punished him for stopping at a forbidden moment to talk to a chum. He had just learned of the good grades received for his recitation, and had been so elated that he had forgotten the order to march directly to his seat. He had stopped to chat, he had disobeyed the military discipline of the school. In punishment, he was kept until nighttime instead of being allowed to go home as was the custom each Saturday afternoon. He wept.

He looked forward with such eagerness to homecoming at the end of each week, and if truth was to be told, it was not so much to see the family as to have his drawing with Koritsky, but here he was, held in the hateful school, writing a senseless assignment in French over and over again, twenty-five times in all, before he could go home.

At home, dinner was kept hot waiting for him, and at last he appeared, crying tears of humiliation. The family hustled about to cheer Jimmie, to restore his appetite—he had not eaten anything since breakfast, and then but a penny-roll—and soon the tears were dry and the evening hours pleasant.

Chapter Twenty-Four

JOHNNIE became ill shortly after Whistler had left for Hamburg. Dr. Rogers was at once summoned.

Dysentery, he said, and came four times daily, sometimes staying past midnight, writing one futile prescription after another to ease the baby's sufferings. Anna paced the bedroom, Johnnie in her arms. She sang hymns, trying to bring him sleep.

From the very beginning the good Scotsman feared for the boy's life, and so called a consulting colleague—a German physician who for the past twenty years had been in charge of a children's hospital in the capital. It was of small consolation to Anna when he courteously explained that the epidemic had been brought from some neighboring towns, and that in St. Petersburg alone nearly ten people died of dysentery daily, but it pleased her when he defined the illness—as every illness should indeed be defined—a visitation from God, in mercy sent to check dependence on creature comforts.

"Yes," Anna nodded in agreement, "our cup would have been too full without this check, for we are looking forward to the arrival of my dear husband with darling Debo."

God was jealous of such anticipated happiness, and in His true Old Testament wrath He sent Johnnie's illness.

She would have considered it blasphemy had anyone told her that this illness, as many another illness in St. Petersburg, was caused not by God but by bad water. The water supply was appallingly unsanitary in the Tsar's capital. The best was supposed to come from the Neva; it was drinking water, and water carts selling it from house to house had their tanks painted white. Water for washing purposes came in green tanks from the Fontanka River, and in yellow ones from the slow and dirty canals. There was more than a suspicion that canal water was sometimes carelessly sold for Neva water. On top of many a house stationary storage tanks contained water, which was either sent down the pipes to the several apartments or distributed by dvorniks in pails.

Many dvorniks used the storage tanks as their private bathtubs. Moreover, they often invited their friends to share such baths.

II

Johnnie died in the afternoon of October the fourteenth.

The crib was removed to the quiet room in which he had been born fourteen months before. The sickroom bore an altered look: the dark curtains were down, and a fire was in the grate to warm Anna. She walked the rooms, and preached in a hoarse strange voice: "His redeemed spirit is borne on angels' wings, no doubt. He is returned to God who had lent him to cheer us. He is taken so suddenly to warn us. Be ye also ready!"

With a frantic intensity she declaimed:

"The sinless child with mission high
To us on earth was given
To teach us that this world should be
The vestibule to Heaven."

But, in secret, she was smitten. Her spirit, she said to herself, was willing but the flesh was weak. She felt ill and could taste nothing. Again and again she went into the chill room.

She could not forgive herself that in the past summer she had been proud of Johnnie, of his health, of his growth, as compared with other American children on the Peterhof road. This was her deserved punishment. She suppressed tears. 'Twas wrong to weep: God showed his love by taking Johnnie away from this world of sin and sorrow.

Whistler and Debo were back, but she hardly noticed them as, with an effort, she led in family devotions, presided at breakfast, and waited for the funeral. William Ropes helped. Through him, permission was obtained from the Russian authorities to send the small box to America, to be buried in the Stonington lot overlooking the sea.

Funeral services were held at the house. Fellow Americans came from Alexandrovsky, Jimmie and Willie were brought from the school, and all wept together with Anna.

III

She used the occasion of the boys' stay at home to see to their prayers with a redoubled watchfulness. She feared that at school, in the multitude of different creeds, they had to hurry through their devotions. The day after the funeral service the entire family went to church. Anna and Debo attended the Lord's table together. Kneeling, Anna sadly thought: "When shall I have the happiness of seeing my husband kneeling at the altar?"

Soon her prayers seemed to have been answered—in part, at least. Whistler thought of God, Whistler spoke of God. Early in the morning and late in the evening he preferred harsh kneeling to soft pillow. It pleased the Lord, he said, to take their little one. There was something more than usual in being stricken in a strange land. Anna, what a pure Christian she was. God grant that he, Whistler, might profit by her example. She taught, he said, everyone around her to accept God's will in all sincerity. He



A Water-Carrier
By Alexis Venetsianov

too was seeking counsel from on high. Along the railroad works he now traveled with a Bible as his companion.

The first few days in November were warm; as yet there was no ice on the Neva. To cheer Anna, Whistler took her for short walks before breakfast. As they walked, she saw nobody and nothing.

Friends came again, to console with kind words and gifts. The Harrisons, returning from England, brought her a beautiful tea caddie of petrified wood from Spa, an embroidered pelerine and some lace from Brussels, a pair of Tyrolese gloves from Prussia, also a case of Birmingham scissors. Anna smiled in weak gratitude.

Chapter Twenty-Five

WHISTLER sought forgetfulness in railroad work. Matters had piled up in his absence, and he had much to do. Early in November he left to meet Kleinmichel in Moscow; the final inspection tour for this year of 1846 lasted one month, and Whistler's patience was tested to its utmost by Kleinmichel's caprices.

The tour had been marked not only by work and commands but also by a few festivities. A portion of the railroad from St. Petersburg to Kolpino had been completed, a distance of some seventeen miles, and the engineers celebrated the achievement. Locomotives and cars were sent to meet Kleinmichel and the American; the hoarse whistle and the steady beat of the wheels were like music in the men's ears. There were refreshments and speeches.

The Countess came out to Chudovo to join her lord. The Kleinmichels took over Colonel Melnikov's house for the night, yet, rudely, they omitted to ask him to act their host, and the Colonel himself was compelled to seek hospitality of another officer. Whistler was indignant at such treatment of his friend, but of course could do or say nothing. He was rather relieved that the Kleinmichels did not invite him to stay with them, and hastened to accept the offer of Melnikov's host. As always, Whistler was touched by the courtesies of these minor Russian officers, by the eager and graceful hospitality with which they greeted travelers.

II

While Whistler was away, letters came from America. Anna opened and read them before forwarding the letters on to the Major. An English girl, a friend of Debo's, present in the house when the mail arrived was amazed at such practice: it was, explained the girl, an unheard-of liberty among the British for anyone of womenfolk to break the seals of the master's correspondence.

Foremost in the letters was news from the Mexican theater of war. George wrote that his uncle, Colonel Whistler, had been ordered back to the lines of action. In the casualty lists there were familiar names. Thus a friend, Captain Williams of the engineers, was killed in the battle of Monterey and buried by the Mexicans with full honors.

War or no war, George again gave trouble. As one of the Swifts once said of him, George had a serious defect in his character: he was unfirm of purpose, and a weathercock should form the crest of his coat-of-arms. Late in September, George rode to Washington to consult with General Swift on a plan he had of going to Russia on his own hook. He said he would not be a burden to his father, nor would he even work for or with him: the Winans people wanted Whistler's son as their representative in Russia. It was something or other about laying rails. Ross Winans said they would give an interest in their establishment to a competent person, and thought George would do well.

The plot was transparent: Major Whistler was planning to leave Russia as soon as the railroad was completed, but the Winans people wanted to stay on, to run not only the works at Alexandrovsky but the entire railroad. They clearly needed the powerful screen of the Whistler name. In fact, George William Whistler would do much better for their aims than George Washington Whistler. For the young man was inexperienced and pliable. The Swifts saw through the plot, and cautiously suggested that George first consult his father.

The Major, on hearing of the scheme, disapproved vehemently. He was thinking of the time when all of the family, George included, would be reunited on American soil. Oh to return to America! To leave no one behind, to leave nothing but the railroad as a Whistler contribution to Russia.

To return home if only to reform Brother William, the dear but erring Mac! Recently there had been a letter from Mac. It was by no means satisfactory, being a copy of what Anna's brother called a circular, addressed to various relatives and containing a statement of his financial troubles and prospects. Whistler felt that as

ever Mac was full of wild projects, of his usual excitement and extravagance of manner. The Major asked: "What will it come to?"

III

He returned to St. Petersburg when cold weather was at last succeeding the prolonged mild season. It was snowing and freezing, and finally, in the intense cold, the Neva closed.

He came back to worry about Debo. His girl's health was at one time restored by the stay and travel in England, but now look at her walking from room to room a lone and melancholy figure. This Russian climate was not good for her; soon she would ail again.

And so it did happen, and Anna tried to explain it away by the heavy shuba the girl was wearing: under such awkward furs no one could exercise properly; because she could not move briskly and often enough, Debo lost appetite and sleep.

These weeks it was a pleasure to watch Jimmie on his week-end visits from Jourdan's: a manly fellow, blessed with unbounded cheerfulness, and healthy. With Willie, however, it was quite different: though he brought the best testimonials from his masters, Willie was a complete Whistler the way he suffered from homesickness. Every Sunday night, when it was time to return to school, he and Anna parted in tears. Jimmie looked on with dry eyes, but Anna was sure he loved his home as well as Willie did.

Actually, the week-end at home was not the pleasure both boys pretended. In later life they were to confess the torture of that Saturday afternoon homecoming. Anna washed their heads, mended their clothes and their manners, making each boy spick and span as a new pin. She locked away their toys and worldly books. Thus did she prepare them for Sunday. On Sunday they were marched to the English church and American chapel, three times in the long, long day.

It was different when Father was home. One evening the boys made bows under the Major's direction. Another time Whistler cheered them by imitating Scotch bagpipes on his flute. The win-

ter was well on its course, the boys were enjoying their Christmas and New Year vacation, and now Whistler and Anna noticed that Jimmie again was losing weight and color; uneasily they looked at the pale handsomeness of the thin boy, comparing it to the blooming air of his roly-poly brother.

Thus they were not at all surprised at a sudden attack of Jimmie's rheumatism. They wrapped oiled silk around the boy's ankles and pressed mustard plasters to his chest and side, but the attack gained in intensity. The boy screamed whenever touched. On sleepless nights he asked for hymns, and as Anna solemnly sang them he sighed with the weariness of it all, and missed drawing fearfully. They brought him an immense volume of Hogarth's engravings, and on a darkish February day he lifted his head to say to Anna: "Oh how I wish I were well!"

"I hope you are not getting impatient of seclusion?"

"Oh no, Mother," he smiled through pain, "I was only thinking how glad I should be to show this book of engravings to my drawing master. It's not everyone who has a chance of seeing Hogarth's own engravings of his originals!"

Jimmie was happy. He was grateful for every kindness, he rarely fussed these days—for he had his Hogarth—the Hogarth whom from then on throughout all his years he was to regard as the greatest English artist that ever lived. He added: "And if I had not been ill, Mother, perhaps no one would have thought of showing him to me!"

When at last Jimmie recovered and ate his first hearty meal of roast chicken and jelly, Anna raised her eyes and her voice in prayer and praise. She arranged for the family's devotions to be held in his room. Jimmie sat up, feeble and calm, in that funny re-fitted old dressing gown of Debo's. Debo had had a cold but was now better; well-cloaked, she was brought to her brother's room, where they tried to cheer each other.

From the clear cracking frost of a winter day the Major would come in to say hello to the two invalids. Debo looked up with hope: he would let her go to England again as soon as the spring came, would he not? These days even her stepmother agreed that the swamp upon which St. Petersburg had been founded was never

intended for any inhabitants but bears and wolves. Everybody lost health here, and in the lifeless appearance of St. Petersburg's men and women Anna found a certain resemblance to the anemic looks of the natives of the American South. All classes and ages suffered from the accursed atmosphere, but young girls especially.

The Major was concerned about Jimmie no less than about Debo. He played chess with the boy and between moves shook his head over Jimmie's alarming state—clearly the fault of Jourdan's. The close confinement within the barrack-like school walls had done Jimmie no good. Willie, too, was in a bad way, a stranger amid the fifty boys despite all these months. And Anna—sadly bereft of Johnnie, she needed the two living boys' presence at home. Besides, there might be something to her lament that at school their morals were in danger.

And so the Major decided that the experiment of Jourdan's, like the earlier hiring of Lamartine, was a failure. The boys must not return to Jourdan's.

The boys greeted the verdict with huzzahs. Jimmie was soon out on the streets, weak but well. He often crossed the ice to the Academy for an absorbing hour or two. Both boys skated on the Neva, and in the mild bright weather of neither wind nor thaw Anna came to the Quay to watch her sons' skill. The Factory's skating grounds on the river were a large evergreen-hedged oblong, scraped and smoothed daily. One of the Merrielees youths was teaching Willie hockey. At home, Debo took care of the boys' worldly studies while Anna resumed religious instruction. It was hard to induce Jimmie to leave his Hogarth and his pencils or pen-and-ink. What we sow that shall we reap, Anna said, as she ordered them to memorize a Bible verse a day. In time to come, a diligent search in Jimmie's or Willie's mind would reveal it stored with holy texts for every emergency, for support and comfort through sufferings of sickness and on the bed of death.

Death, she said, death—death.

Be ready for it.

Chapter Twenty-Six

PARIS is a seacoast city now," wrote Turgenev in the spring of 1847 as the first train from the French capital arrived in Le Havre, making the distance in little over six hours. In 1847 the first railroad of Denmark was completed on the island of Zealand. In the same year the first rail line of Switzerland was opened between Zurich and Aarau. For the next year the first line of Spain, out of Barcelona, was scheduled to be ready for traffic. The world was being girded with the novel iron net, and London *Punch* reported the case of a gentleman in the Queen's Bench who papered his room with railway shares from every country of his knowledge:

"The gentleman breakfasts in England, takes his tiffin in India, dines at Paris, and sleeps in Switzerland, just according as he moves his chair. Every share has been made to run in the direction of the fire-place. In this way the flue ingeniously represents the grand central terminus of all the lines in the world."

Was the gentleman being ironic? Did he mean that fire would be the best destination of all the railroads and their shares? Aware of some such distrust, railroad companies tried to dispel it; the French company marked the day of the opening of its line to Le Havre by distributing twelve thousand francs among the poor. And amid the suspicions, amid the jeering, the railroads of the world did expand. Even this Russian line of Whistler's would some day be completed. Suspicion and bitter jests were here too, but —

In this early spring of 1847 rails were laid in small stretches, and the first locomotives rushed and hooted. Whistler was busy, Whistler was happy, as he and his inspectors hastened on hand-worked trolleys or horse-pulled wagonettes to this new patch of work and that. On windy days, the traveling engineers added sails and ordinary umbrellas—perhaps remembering the sailing-cars of the Baltimore & Ohio of seventeen years back.

Kleinmichel came for frequent joy riding, and was given the best trolley there was: in front, a leather apron guarded the ve-

hicle against dust; above, a small roof protected the travelers from the sun and rain. With him came Zhelezovich, an architect, his face rotund and red; and Doctor Feichtner, a small and swarthy man. When his fancy so decreed, Kleinmichel commandeered an engineer or two as supplement to the party. As they drove over the brand-new route of iron, the Count was in good spirits. Being in good spirits, he treated the guests to his favorite cold cutlets. The meat was heavily peppered. Looking at the startled faces and choking mouths of the guests the doctor sweetly explained: "Without this piquancy His Excellency's stomach does not function."

Between the mouthfuls the Count inspected the rails, the stations, the machinery, and the serfs, and yelled commands and punishments.

Machinery in added numbers came to the line. Begrimed mechanics from Alexandrovsky instructed the serfs, and went back to their own lathes. Left alone, the serfs often had difficulties, jamming and ruining the machines. They were whipped for every misstep, but when they did a thing well no reward was held out to them. Whistler remarked how amazingly philosophic they were. He never saw more cheerful fellows, he said.

The Russian officers told him they understood the serfs very well indeed. These peasants, the officers asserted, were but servants of the Tsar and of the nobility; they must be watched and beaten. To fellow Yankees, Whistler declared that in order to succeed with the railroad, which he and the serfs were building for the Tsar, the Russians must adopt a more civilized system. But would they?

II

Some of the first locomotives on Whistler's line would suddenly stop—for lack of water. That is to say, there was plenty of water near the railroad, but it contained too much lime to be used for boilers. These streams and lakes, jested the natives, were like the Russian newspapers: much stuff, all of no use.

A Russian journal or two dared to print innocuous caricatures wherein the new toy—the locomotive—figured. Whistler's line

was a fashionable subject, a theme of general remark even at such thoughtless places as the capital's ballrooms, even by such persons as Mme. Rondeau, a notorious Frenchwoman, a demi-mondaine then operating in St. Petersburg. At a masquerade she boldly charged the imperial appetite: she teased the Tsar and flirted with him until he walked hand in hand with her the length of the animated floor. He was interested—he was taking her toward his chief of gendarmes to be investigated. It was then, on the way, that she jested to Nicholas about the railroad. She said:

"Savez-vous, Sire, je trouve que les masquerades de Petersbourg ressemblent beaucoup au chemin de fer."

"Comment?"

"Mais parce qu'ils rapprochent les distances."

"Je ne comprends pas."

"Car l'Empereur de toutes les Russies présente ici son bras à une. . . ."

The Tsar laughed and, bringing the Frenchwoman to the head gendarme, said:

"Écoutez un peu ce qu'elle chante."

He thought he could afford to laugh. The railroad was his, and he would run it so that it would be his tool, not that of his democratic enemies. It would shorten distances of his choosing only.

III

Nevertheless, on occasion, doubts assailed the Tsar.

There was, he thought, too much talk and movement round the railroad even before the iron was laid and the first long train ran. What would happen when the line was completed? Was old Kankrin, now rotting in his grave, right after all? Travel was *progress* from one point to another. The dreaded word! Travelers did see fresh places, new faces, and novel things. They would bring home new thoughts—perhaps. Perhaps this freedom of thought would lead to freedom of action.

Observe the trend of things in foreign lands: out there, railroads were becoming a weapon of revolutionaries. That man Cavour, the crafty politician who wanted to rouse Italians to a revolt

against their Austrian sovereign, advocated among other media a network of railroads in Italy to bring about her unity against the Habsburgs. Cavour said that the railroads would do away with local jealousies of the Italians, and that Rome should be the center of the iron-path system.

Observe also the new pope, Pius IX, elected by the anti-Austrian members of the conclave. He began his reign by such heretic action as freeing political prisoners—Nicholas could not believe his ears when he heard of it. And in the very same breath the Pope appointed a commission to consider the question of railways barred by the preceding pontiff. Coupling, as it were, a political amnesty with the introduction of railways! Was Nicholas, the Tsar of All the Russias, in his senses when he first introduced the mighty steed into his own domains? Was he not bringing a Trojan horse against his own interests?

But just as he was beginning to allow such doubts to worry him, a reassuring bit of news came from the same West: a rebellion was successfully quelled precisely because a sovereign had railroads to help him—it was Prussia's Sixth Army Corps, twelve thousand men in all, with their horses, carts, guns and other munitions, that rode over two rail lines at once to stifle in blood the uprising at Cracow. So efficient was the move that the rebel Poles lost out, and the free republic of Cracow was no more. And if the King of Prussia, the brother-in-law of Tsar Nicholas, was clever and quick enough to use rail against rebels, so much more cleverly and quickly would he act, he, the Tsar of All the Russias, a sovereign mightier than the Prussian ruler, with a greater army to send over the new iron road against any unrest that might arise.

The Tsar was happy once again, and if anyone hinted as to the democratic potentialities of the new invention of iron and steam he could dismiss it with a haughty stare or, were it a pretty woman, with a brief laugh.

IV

The intellectuals of Russia were in those years divided into two main camps: the Slavophiles and the Westernizers. The former

preached against progress and justified the Tsar's polity. The latter longed for a liberal, democratic day.

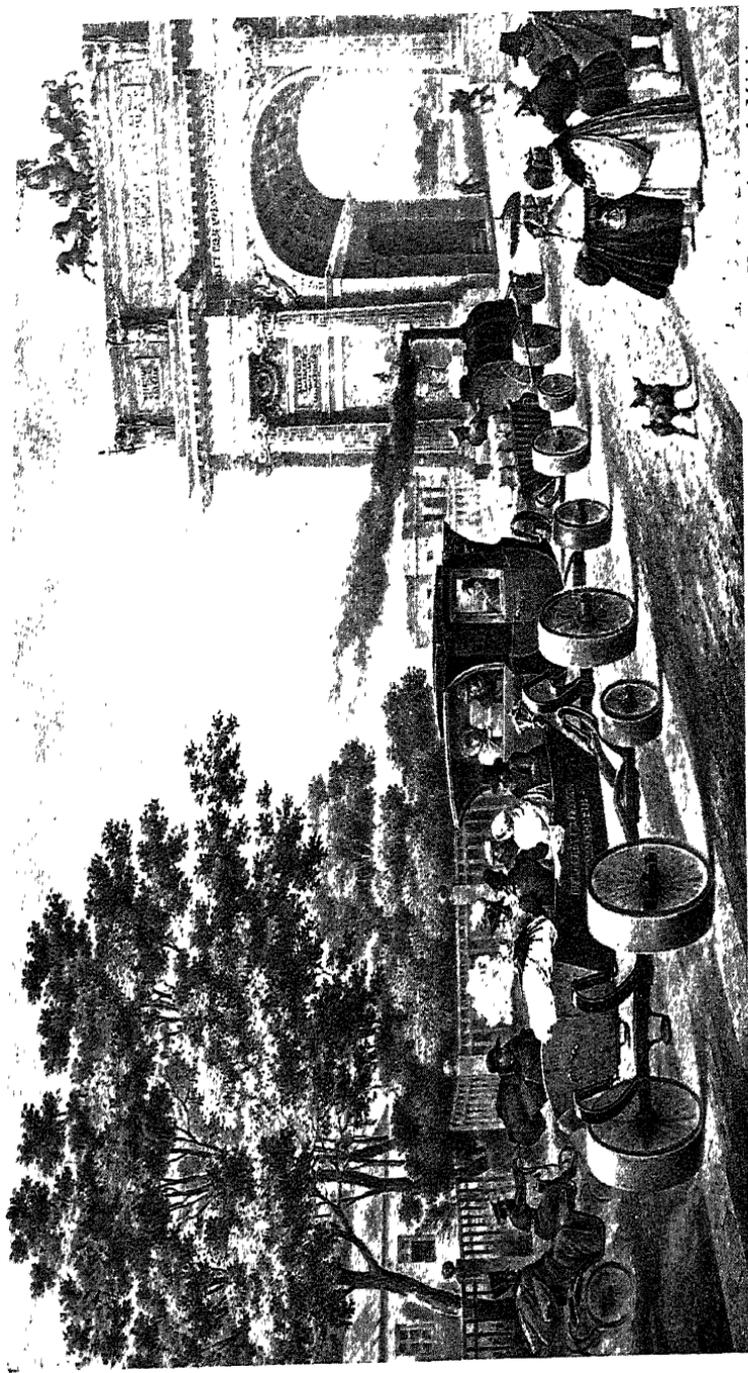
The Slavophiles were an empty and emotional crew. Among other things, they hated the memory of Peter the Great who had brought Western ideas into Russia. A certain leader of the Slavophiles, as an outward manifestation of his beliefs, insisted on dressing in what he thought was a true pre-Petrine kaftan. Thus attired he walked the streets of both capitals, much to the amazement of the Russian folk who did not know the meaning of such garments and took the gentleman for a visiting Persian.

The Slavophiles reserved their most virulent enmity for those intellectuals of the '40s who would continue Tsar Peter's work. They raged against the leader of the opposing camp, Vissarion Belinsky. This chief of the Westernizers was a writer of philosophic and literary criticism which, adroitly eluding the censors, was setting young souls a-soaring. There he was—a slight, consumptive man, ambling through the streets to the editorial offices in his old raccoon coat and badly-worn galoshes; his weak but pleasant voice ever in a hurry to give his companions the best arguments he possessed in favor of enlightenment; his blue-golden eyes sparkling despite his cough; his small, handsome hands punctuating his remarks.

The railroad—this new railroad the American was building for the Tsar—became an important point of contention between the two camps of arguers.

The Slavophiles feared railroads. They felt that the novel means of communication would bring Holy Russia closer to the West, would europeanize the Slav nation and thus annihilate its pure spirit allegedly of great superiority to the unclean Western essence. At home, railroads would inevitably bring emancipation of peasants, the end of serfdom—of the titanic pillar upon which true Russia rested.

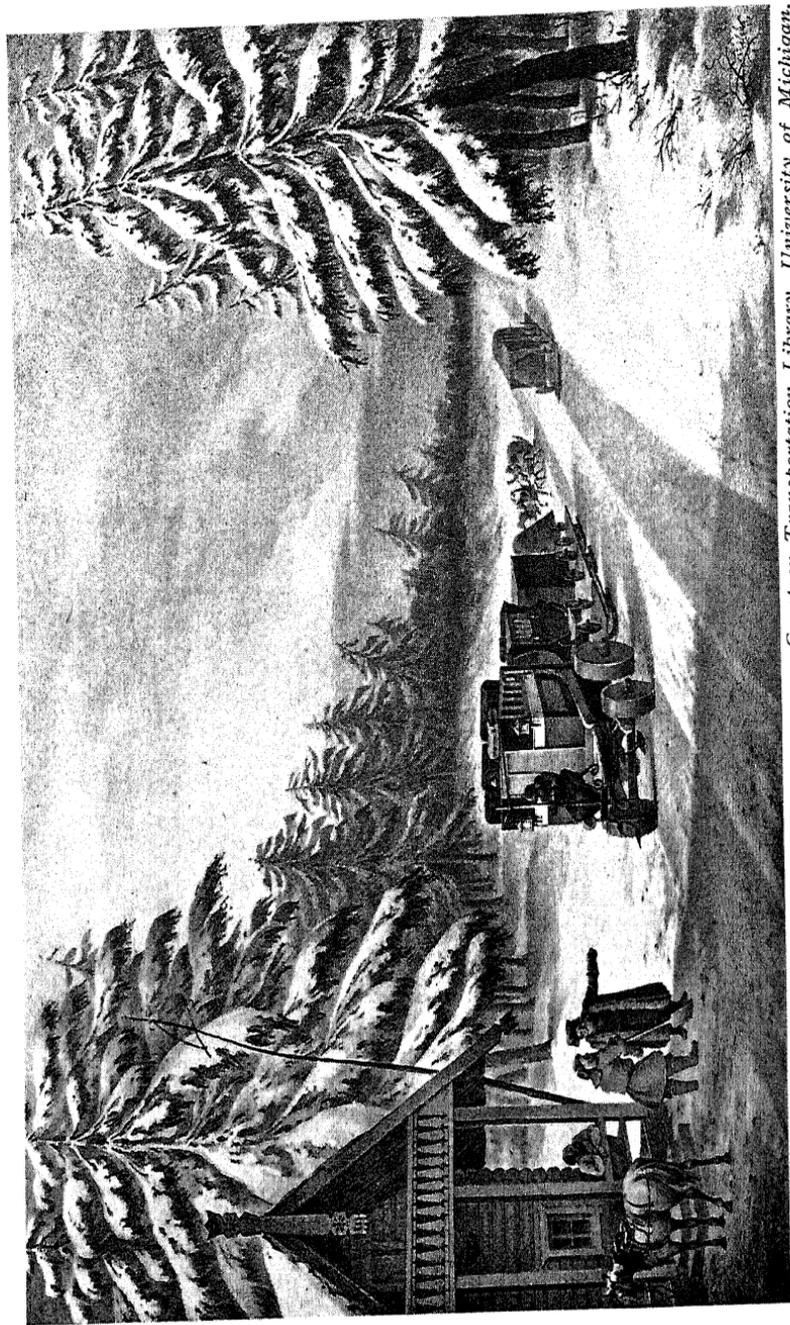
But the literati of finer material and clearer brain, men of rebellious cast of mind with their faces turned Westward, regarded the question of Russia's roads with different eyes. This year of 1847 Alexander Herzen was leaving the Tsar's realm for good. He



Courtesy Transportation Library, University of Michigan.

A STEAM-TRAIN WITHOUT RAILS

As the Russians visualized their first steam-road before foreigners brought their invention into the Tsar's land.
From *Uchrezhdeniye tortsovykh dorog*, St. Petersburg, 1836-37.



Courtesy Transportation Library, University of Michigan.

A RAIL-LESS STEAM-TRAIN IN WINTERTIME

Another figment of Russian imagination. From *Uchrezhdeniye tortsovykh dorog*.

was Belinsky's comrade-at-pen, and him too the Slavophiles despised and feared. As he was traveling out of his ungenerous, unventilated fatherland and toward the welcome frontier, he was thinking of Nicholas and clenching his fist under the lap robe. To him all that was bad in Russia could be traced directly to the Tsar; his hostility toward Nicholas proved to be one of the most remarkable phenomena in Russian literature; he was going abroad to write in freedom the most fiery indictments ever directed against that Tsar. It was winter as he journeyed, he later wrote, the cold time of the short days and all the inconveniences of Russia's bumpy snow-and-ice which *they* tried to represent as the Slavs' own railroad built by no man's hand, given to Russia as a precious gift by Nature herself. *They!* Along this terrible road glorified by *them*—the late Kankrins and living Slavophiles—he was quitting his harsh fatherland forever. Outside looking in, he would wait for better days and smoother ways.

His fellow Westernizers were somewhat less impatient and more hopeful. They were remaining in Russia. They continued to be critical of everything stamped with the double-headed eagle, but here and there they discerned a ray of the better morrow. The railroad was one such ray, surely.

In St. Petersburg, at the end of Nevsky Prospect, in front of the nearly finished station, there was an accidental meeting of Belinsky and Dostoyevsky.

Belinsky said: "I cannot wait calmly. I take my daily walk to this place. Every day I look at the railroad."

To him, he said, the rails and cars were to be the link bringing Russia into the heavenly folds of the Western civilization, purifying and ennobling his unhappy land.

Dostoyevsky, however, thought that it was melancholy to find his friend so mistakenly feverish.

"Oh, if poor Belinsky knew how others, particularly the builders of this road, looked at it!"

He tried to tell Belinsky that others looked at the new invention as but a medium of crass commercial profit.

The dreamer nodded, sadly: "I look at it differently, and that is what ails me."

They walked, discussing this railroad, also the railroads of the future. From the problem of heating the railroad cars they chattered away to the question of heating Moscow's dwellings. Wood in the old capital was becoming increasingly dear. It was in a fair way to be even more expensive with the years as more and more railroads would meet at Moscow. Dostoyevsky remarked that those very railroads of the future would bring wood to Moscow from the forests of Russia's remote regions. Belinsky was astonished: Dostoyevsky had such scant knowledge of reality! Belinsky laughed loudly:

"He wants to carry wood by railroad!"

The idea seemed a monstrous sacrilege. He thought that railroads would carry passengers only. Of freight, they would transport but the finest and most valuable—*articles de Paris*, so to say. Wood, indeed! Lord God—wood!

The locomotive was a beast, true, but its great-footed gait was poesy, not prose. It was not to be soiled by either prosaic use or profane word. Belinsky was not alone in this feeling. A minor poet of the time exclaimed:

"The muse of poetry will have to change its habits and habitat, will have to make the iron horse its Pegasus!

"What beauty is in this winged machine in its flight across Russia's fields!

"There it speeds, gurgling its boiling waters, full of red-hot coals, this unicorn tumultuous yet meek, this bellowing volcano swifter than wind, whose motion can yet be arrested by a mere child's hand!"

And in the same year of 1847 one of the nation's sweetest bards, the slight, shriveled Tyutchev, wrote home from Germany after a ride on the iron road:

"Oh let us not curse the railroad! 'Tis a wonderful thing of today! To me especially it is a boon, for it puts my imagination at rest with regard to my most terrible enemy—*space*, the hateful space which on ordinary post-roads binds me, destroys my soul and body!"

V

Across the ocean, in the republic whence the builder of Russia's new road had come, philosophers and humanity-lovers were also growing to like the smoke-belching steed.

Railway was becoming a synonym for speed and accuracy in the service of the good. In the abolitionist Midwest and New England the running of Negro slaves to freedom was presently called the Underground Railway because, although done with rowboat- and horse-transport, it was as rapid and precise as railway service. And in their own private and selfish affairs had not Americans changed to ways less slovenly and more pleasing to the sight of God since the railroad was invented? Did they not think and talk faster in the car depot than in the stage-coach office? It was, surprisingly enough, no other man than Henry Thoreau who asked these optimistic questions.

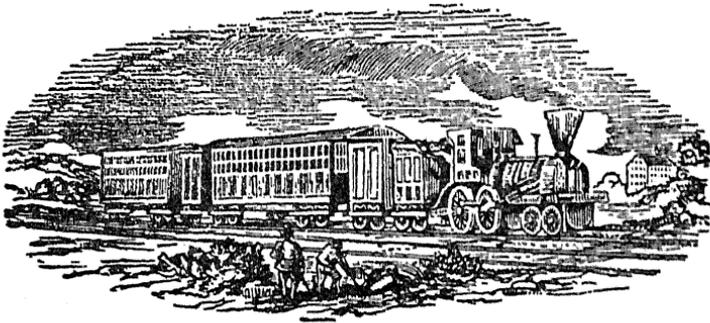
He answered them as rosily as he asked.

He found something electrifying about the atmosphere of the depot. He was astonished at the miracles it had wrought in the hit-and-miss habits of his neighbors. He appreciated these new times and men whose byword was to do things "railroad-fashion," that is, swiftly and on time. (About the year 1847 the first railroad schedules were printed either as cards or as broadsides and displayed in America's post offices, courthouses, theaters and hotel lobbies, for all to see and thus be urged to promptness in arrival at stations, thus be generally drilled to quicker and more exact day-by-day action, hour-by-hour step.)

The erstwhile pessimist Thoreau was now willing to grant the railroad its positive influence. Every morning he watched the passage of the fiery dragon with the same feeling with which he observed the rising of the sun. Of a summer afternoon, he sat by his window and in bliss listened to the hiss and tattoo of railroad cars, either fading off, or reviving like the beat of a partridge. There was music in the sound, and more. The Fitchburg Railroad touched his beloved pond at a point some hundred rods from his hut; it was along the railroad causeway that he now walked to

the village: "I am, as it were, related to society by this link." As he walked, the men on the passing freight trains bowed to him. He said: "They pass me often, and apparently they take me for an employee; and so I am. I too would fain be a track repairer somewhere in the orbit of the earth."

And though the whistle of the locomotive at times still seemed to him as predatory as the scream of a hawk sailing over a farmer's yard, more frequently the train was to him like a comet, a traveling demigod, a cloud-compeller. Its steam-tail stretched and waved like a banner of golden and silver wreaths. Before long this new creation of man would take the sunset sky for its livery! O the awe and hope of it: the swift daring and precise arrival! O the wonder—as if the earth were at last inhabited by a race of men worthy of it!



Chapter Twenty-Seven

AS THE work season of 1847 opened, Whistler learned that for some reason, which he said he could not quite comprehend, the railroad builders were cut one-third of their funds. They had asked for fifteen million silver rubles, but the government gave only ten.

A blind policy, Whistler lamented. The Tsar had already spent some thirty million silver rubles on the railroad. The money had been a special loan asked by the government, and there had seemed to be no difficulty in taking this loan up; indeed, the entire sum had been subscribed in the very beginning. But it was bruited around that the appropriation for 1847, out of the loan money, had been spent in the previous year's travels of the imperial family. The marriage festivities of last July had doubtless eaten into the railroad-building funds. So were things done in Russia, Whistler complained to his American friends: "No troublesome members of Congress to call for information."

He could not understand why the follies of the court should be placed above the needs of the state. Yet the Tsar and Kleinmichel expected him to continue his efforts with all due speed. There were constant tours of inspection. In March, Whistler's presence was incessantly required on the completed stretch of road to Kolpino, for a visit from the Tsar was expected, and Kleinmichel wanted the rail to beam and sparkle. The Count traveled over it, and was pleased with the ease of riding in the cars. Then Nicholas came. He, too, was satisfied, expressing his approbation in terms most flattering to the American.

II

While in this reviewing spell, the Tsar said he wanted to see the inside of the machine shops at Alexandrovsky. Marvels had been told of the American-run establishment. During the preceding year as many as eighty locomotives had been built by the

Yankees. Monthly, six locomotives and tenders were turned out. Daily, the wood-turning division prepared five sets of woodwork for the eight-wheel box cars, while in the freight-car department twenty-five mechanics assembled five box cars. The passenger-car department was about ready to finish four cars each month. The shops by now employed 1920 foremen and workmen, among them 1613 Russians, 164 Swedes, 121 Germans, seventeen Englishmen, and five Americans. New and startling improvements were reported out of the soot and noise of the shops. It was here that one of the American partners, Joseph Harrison, designed and built the first machine for boring out holes for right-hand crank pins in the driving wheels of locomotive engines. It was from here that the new machine eventually spread to every locomotive shop in the world. All this the Tsar wanted to see.

He fixed the noon hour of March the sixteenth for departing from the railroad station at St. Petersburg. He arrived punctual to the tick of the minute. In his gold-blazoned, silver-braided entourage were the heir-apparent Grand Duke Alexander; the second son, Grand Duke Constantin; and Maria's husband, the Duke of Leuchtenberg. Behind them shuffled Fieldmarshal Paskevich, conqueror and viceroy of Poland; also ministers and generals and admirals and the two warring colonels of the railroad, Kraft and Melnikov; and of course Count Kleinmichel—with Whistler in uncomfortable tow.

As Nicholas paused to examine the locomotive at the head of the train, Whistler came forward to give explanations. They boarded the train. The American rode in the same car with the Tsar, who was affably curious:

"Can the railroad be opened to Moscow in two years more?"

Whistler without hesitation answered in the affirmative. Yes, 1849 would see the successful completion of the great undertaking. Above the rhythmic click-clack of the brief journey his words were as clipped and exact as these sweet metallic sounds of the train in motion.

In eight minutes they were at Alexandrovsky.

Harrison, Eastwick, and Thomas Winans met the Tsar at the main entrance. There were stiff presentations. The show began.

The partners and Whistler answered questions and pointed out

tools and artisans as the procession glittered up the stairs and down again, through the aisles and amid the machinery. Nicholas said how much he admired the polish and beauty, the finish and efficiency, of the various lathes. He called the attention of his dukes and generals now to this cylinder of steel, now to that bulk of engine. He made them view and touch the rollers and boilers, frames and driving wheels. He made them stare at every phase of locomotive making, step by step, until the erecting shop was reached where all the parts were put together into a full, completed locomotive, cleanly painted and slickly veneered. Fine, fine, said the Emperor.

They marched to the shops where wheels, axles, and trucks were made for the tenders and freight cars. Next, to the steam forge-hammer, a new invention. And, at length, to the sheds for finished work, where a bright array of one hundred and eighteen locomotives freshly painted and cleaned, all of uniform shape and color—no everyday sight, to be sure—pleased the Emperor's soldiery eye. They also paid a visit to the shops where wood for the freight cars was turned; and to the two erecting shops for freight cars and passenger cars.

In the meantime hundreds of workers had been assembled, drawn up in orderly rows. The Tsar and his suite reviewed them. They were fine fellows, Nicholas pronounced at last, adding: "But they will get drunk sometimes! What a pity they make beasts of themselves!"

The workmen stood silent, motionless.

The Emperor turned to Whistler and the partners, to tell them that he was pleased, that he was grateful, and would one of them run the locomotive of his train back to St. Petersburg?

These foreigners knew their business. But so did his Russians too. The Tsar remembered to thank Kleinmichel and, in fewer words, Melnikov and Kraft.

III

Came the well-measured shower of promotions, gifts and decorations as token of the Emperor's pleasure with the roadwork and the shops. The two colonels, Melnikov and Kraft, were made

major-generals. The three American chiefs, Harrison, Eastwick, and Thomas Winans, received a handsome ring apiece, each worth six thousand silver rubles, or, in American money, not less than three thousand dollars.

The three Americans came from Alexandrovsky to the Whistler house to show off the rings. All exclaimed over the precious look and quality of the imperial gift, but Anna told them they should really convert the rings into brooches for their wives. Not that she would want to wear a ring or brooch like such a one. A jewel of this extravagance would be inappropriate to her own retired station, she explained; she could not be tempted to own such costly and useless trinkets.

Anxiously, jealously, she waited to see her husband's reward. The news came within a few hours: Major George Washington Whistler was to be decorated with the Order of St. Anne of the second degree.

The order was presented the next day after the royal trip to the works. Kleinmichel held a levée, to which Whistler was invited. On arrival the Major was summoned to an inner apartment, where the Count awaited him. It was with an extraordinary flourish of kindness that Kleinmichel met the American. He kissed the Major on both cheeks in that well-known hearty manner of the more expansive Russians, and then hung around his neck a scarlet ribbon with the medal, delivering the while a pretty speech about the honor thus conferred by the Emperor.

Whistler was abashed—such honors are new to us republicans, sir—but, returning with the Count to the general assembly, he regained his composure as high officers hastened to congratulate him. As he went out of the palace, servants too flocked to bow and felicitate this great and lucky foreigner.

At home he swung around his index finger the ribbon with the massive gold medal. On the reverse side were two Russian words, *Za Userdiye*, which meant that he was rewarded For Zeal. From the superior side of the medal a portrait of Nicholas ogled him officially.

His Russian friends noticed that the Major was rather amused by the medal. Well, he was an American, was he not? In that

aberrant realm across the waters people knew neither orders nor other decorations. The Russians grinned at Whistler's amusement.

Some frowned, however, for they noticed that on public occasions when the Major was supposed to wear his decoration he modestly contrived to hide it beneath his coat.

IV

Nevertheless, he did feel a mite better. In April the Neva was still icebound, with every glum prospect of a late opening of the navigation. The summer might be delayed, and that would mean a postponed start of the working season on the line. Yet he felt better. Wishfully he said that his work was progressing well. By 1849 all would be finished, and the Whistlers would return to the States.

A sudden violent epidemic of influenza flared up in the capital. Whistler and the boys took to their beds. They soon recovered, the Major going back to his duties, but the sons remaining to study and play indoors, for the damp air outside held unfathomed dangers.

All around the illness continued to mow down people. The Finnish laundress was so far gone that her pastor was called in to administer sacraments, and her friends wept by the bedside awaiting an early end. Doctor Rogers came in to say that not a family on his list was without patients. So fast-moving proved the germ that a gentleman of his acquaintance, expecting to meet a large dinner party at his house, had thirty excuses sent in at the last moment.

Presently the good doctor could not bring his harrowing stories, for he himself was a patient. General Melnikov staggered in to inform them that he too had been delirious with a high fever, that many were dying daily, and that in fact he was coming from seeing a friend in the last fatal stages of the grippe.

News arrived that Sarah Merrieles was dangerously ill. Her mother and aunt were so exhausted with nursing that they engaged a *Soeur de Charité* to take their place. Soon Mrs. Merrieles came down with the grippe, two of her servants became ill,

and two others fled in fear, while the Sister of Mercy showed symptoms of the 'flu and had to leave. The Whistler women decided they were needed. In the showers of half-snow, half-rain Anna went around visiting her sick friends, and Debo, pale and weak, was with her. Passing the Neva they saw its surface black and spongy; it must soon break up. A Russian officer of their acquaintance pointed to the sleety streets and dark river:

"How can anyone be healthy in this climate?"

Whistler agreed. Every day of this terrible spring convinced him that America was the only country in which to live a natural and happy life. His children should receive their impressions in their own land. On their return, they would perhaps occasionally regret certain things left behind in Russia, but those would be things to which habit alone attached any value whatever. Must he wait till 1849 and the completion of the railroad? It was, he thought, highly important for the welfare of the family that he should return at once. Perhaps. Perhaps not. Duty called for his remaining here, for his seeing the task through to its end.

The tidings from the homeland continued to worry Whistler. George again gypsied around, thinking up new projects! These months he nursed a plan to establish a steam-machine manufactory at Charleston, South Carolina. Ross Winans disagreed with the shallow scheme, but Joseph Swift seemed to favor it. Joseph even helped—by writing to General James Gadsden, his former aide-de-camp who could throw his influence George's way in this particular matter. Whistler wrote to America his regret that George thought it best to quit his job with Ross Winans. He pointed out that the youth had no capital and therefore should acquire experience and standing to serve him in lieu of money if he wished to be a partner in a manufactory. George should have stayed in the Baltimore shop until his service became so indispensable as to bring the youth an offer of partnership.

V

On the first Sunday in May they had to wrap their shubas around them as they walked to church, but on the second Sun-

day it was so hot that they were forced to seek the shady side of the street. The Neva broke its bounds at belated last, and the air at once became midsummery.

The influenza subsided, people smiled oftener, and it was with lighter hearts that the Whistlers celebrated the Major's birthday. The boys wrote neat French notes of congratulation. Anna decided that she had nothing but a kiss to proffer to Whistler, and tenderly he returned the embrace. Her heart, she said, was too full for utterance. Silently she thanked God for such a fine husband. Whistler gave rather than received on this birthday. His gift to Anna was a desk—as beautiful a thing as her first Russian Christmas gift so painfully remembered. Before Debo he placed a splendid musical workbox with her first gold thimble.

And on the same day the short run to Kolpino was officially opened. The week flashed by hectically; several mornings in a row Whistler had to gulp his breakfast to be at the depot by eight o'clock. On St. Nicholas' day he returned at dinnertime to say jubilantly that a thousand passengers had gone with the first train, six hundred by the next, and probably as many in the third and last one. St. Nicholas was the poor's saint; his shrine at Kolpino was revered as a cure for all manner of diseases. The three trains were to come back in the evening. A good beginning, this day of the favorite Russian saint, a fine start for the new railroad.

VI

Traffic was taking shape. In a year's time, from this May to the next, the trial stretch between St. Petersburg and Kolpino was destined to carry eighty thousand passengers and more than two million pounds of freight. Additional sections of the railroad to Moscow were made ready one after another.

As the first train clanked by, the lower classes looked on dismayed and even horrified. It was plain that the rich lords of Russia had been seduced by the oversea devices. The noblemen were causing these cast-iron runways to be laid, along which steam-going houses hauled wares and people. But in truth was it

steam that prompted the houses to run? An invisible force might be behind it all. Foreign cleverness, shameful and unholy. The rich lords of Russia were bored with their money.

Chugunka, the cast-iron one—such was the new folk-name for the railroad. The infidel's *chugunka*. Nevertheless, here and there Russia's folk were becoming more respectful than frightened, more thoughtful than outraged. They said: "How smart the foreign gentleman who has harnessed this samovar and made it run!"

At Vyshni-Volochek, townsmen came to the engineers, hat in hand, asking their high-births and their excellencies to take them on one of those trial trips. The request was granted. A platform on wheels was added to the train. The townsmen climbed upon the platform, some timidly, others boldly and encouraging the shy ones. They were off and away!

But make no mistake about it, the devil was in it. A conquered devil no doubt, meek and very much humiliated, serving these sharp humans against his wish, but a devil just the same: "The gentle-born lords caught the demon and crammed him into the kettle. He has no way out, and thus is he forced to work."

The news traveled ahead, and everywhere peasants came out to see the blasphemous sight. Near a village three old women wildly danced, lifting their skirts and waving their arms. They were trying to shoo the devil off their native site. Dancing Satan away, it was called.

"Like the witches of *Macbeth*," remarked an engineer. "The witches dancing round the cauldron."

As each settlement was approached, the village dogs jumped at the train, and died under its wheels in high surprise at the speed and ferocity of these novel hoofs.

On one such trip the monk-loving engineer of Tver, Leodor Zagoskin, invited a holy father to accompany him. The steady song and rattle of the wheels made the monk so curious that he constantly peered out of the car window. The guide posts of the construction time had not as yet been taken off. One of them struck the monk's face. The father lost the tip of his nose, and returned to the monastery with a bloody visage. The news of the

mishap flew windlike over town and province, and anon people whispered about the railroad in renewed fear of superstition.

The infidel's cast-iron one! Some said it was a she. She walked like an important lady, like a proud noblewoman. Yet she was but a hussy that hissed like a snake. She hooted at Holy Russia's villages:

"Doomed you are! Doomed you are!"

She snorted and spat in the mouzhik's face; she injured and killed God-fearing folk wherever she sped. Soon neater than a broom would she sweep away the entire antiquity of the Russian nation!

VII

The she-devil seemed to be persistent. She not only hovered over the villages, streaking ahead on those shiny wheels and rails of hers, but she also increased the sickness in the labor camps by the side of the line, in the fields, in towns and cities.

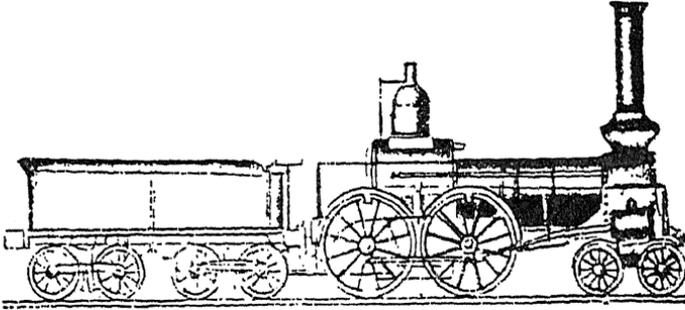
Cholera was her favorite trick nowadays. It was spreading all over Russia, and coming nearer and nearer the two capitals. Not only many people but well-kept ones, too, died. Men who traveled or who read journals said that the disease had started in India. British troops, sailing from India to China to fight the opium wars, had brought cholera along. From China the germs had journeyed to Persia, thence to the Russian shores of the Caspian Sea, and here the dreaded plague was—in European Russia!

Nearer, nearer was the cholera's deadly step. Yet in St. Petersburg there was so far no sign of it. But nearer, nearer it came. On the railroad a few deaths were reported or clumsily concealed. The disease was near by, yes, but the doctors called it sporadic. Sporadic—a learned adjective, that. But would a learned word soothe the troublesome matter? Was it magic? People were dying.

Anna said that at the very word, *cholera*, her heart failed her. One particularly panicky day Whistler came home all set on action. Off to England with all of you! Whistler himself would remain.

On a Russian steamer, well supplied with Russian gold, they sailed for calmer, healthier parts.

On June 12, 1847, they landed at Hull.



A locomotive built by the Americans at Alexandrovsky between 1846 and 1850.

From *Stoletiye zheleznykh dorog*

Book Three

Chapter Twenty-Eight

IT WAS a fine summer in England. Anna and the boys stayed mostly in Preston, with her sisters and other British kin. She attended churches of Lancashire and in great delight listened to preachers, finding them clear reasoners, she said. Jimmie was well, and drew much, but on their occasional travels he displayed temper, his pride wounded when the family journeyed second-class instead of first on the English railroads.

Life was calm and pleasant when Debo most suddenly disrupted its current.

II

Debo began by keeping away from Preston. She went to Switzerland, she visited with the Maingays, she lingered and offered excuses of various invitations before she would even for a brief while return to Anna's circle.

She wanted a life of her own. Marriage would be a way out of the stepmother's clutches. Men young and not so young presented themselves to her, sought her favor, and promised love and loyalty, but she sent them on their way in polite indifference. She felt she would know the right one, and she was quite certain that the right one would come, very soon now.

He came. Francis Seymour Haden was a young physician and an amateur artist. They met in a house of mutual friends. She knew that he was a nephew of the Kirk Bootts, that three years earlier he had been on an etching tour of Italy, that he was twenty-nine years old and yearning for a wife. He evinced a rapt interest in her beauty and accomplishments; his mother had been a musician, and Debo's playing and singing was to him a sweet echo of old dreams. Debo encouraged his interest. He was handsome and seemed kind. It was love at first sight, they confessed.

When late in August the girl came to Preston to whisper the news, Anna was astonished and did not know what to say. She

could not say anything, anyway, for a nasty cold had temporarily deprived her of her voice. Too, Emma Maingay was by Debo's side; the two girls derived such strength from each other, and Anna felt old and weak in their joint presence.

Anna's first thought was of procrastination. But Debo was in a hurry; she wanted to be married this fall. Her stubbornness could not be shaken. Aunt Eliza remarked that they might as well chop her head off as propose her going back to Russia with the family.

Debo and Seymour exchanged daily letters. Sensing the elders' opposition, he wished to prove of what good stock he came. Accordingly he dispatched to Debo, to be shown to her kin, a printed memoir which briefly yet importantly stated the facts of his late father's life and work. Dr. Charles Haden preceded his son in the surgeon's calling; he had been a man of worth and talents beyond the common lot, he had not only doctored the ill and written valuable treatises on medicine but also had shown the artistic spirit and belonged to a musical coterie. Debo was sorry she could not boast to her family of a connection between these musical Hadens and the celebrated composer; the name was spelled differently. But she loved Seymour just the same. Completely enamored, Seymour would have hastened to Preston to be near his beloved, but the kin ruled that first they must have Whistler's consent.

Anna faced the problem of breaking the news to Whistler. Somehow the surprise to him must be softened. However, Seymour was a nephew of the Kirk Bootts, was he not? This ought to help. From their London relatives and friends numerous letters came vouching for Seymour Haden's character and prospects. Flustered and worried, Anna copied as many of the paragraphs of praise as she could, and together with Debo mailed a long letter to Whistler.

III

In St. Petersburg the month of September in the year 1847 was unusually warm. Only after the twenty-first there came days with an autumn's crispness in the air. The Russians said: "Nature is

too good to us. Does it mean that we are to pay for it in some other respect?"

Cholera continued its macabre course in the interior. St. Petersburg was still spared, but the imminent danger lurked quite close. The *beau monde* of the capital was bright with chatter: it now had such an engaging topic for talk and rumor! Curiosity was more prevalent than fear.

"We Russians," remarked a native, "are morally closer to death than we should be. Thus physical death arouses in us less of that horror which is so natural to other humans."

In September, Whistler was on a lone tour of inspection in the direction of Moscow when a letter overtook him. It was from Preston in the joint hand of his wife and daughter. He read it twice before he comprehended the import of its many pages: Debo had been proposed to, by one Seymour Haden, a young physician; Whistler's fatherly consent and blessing were desired.

On the seventeenth, while in Moscow, the Major wrote in reply a jumbled feverish letter to his own dearest Anna: "Oh be assured I can never disapprove of anything you think right!"

Actually he was in a miserable sweat. Debo was to be married—she was leaving him—she, Mary Swift's daughter. He had not done enough to prove his love for her, for his child, the replica of Mary Swift. He did not even deserve the precious letter—or rather her part of the letter—in which she was informing him of that man Haden's suit. But he would try to deserve it from now on. He wished them happiness.

Who was that man Haden anyway? The Major grew suspicious, then mordant. He did not like his women's appeal to spare the young man's nerves and not prolong the suspense of his blessing. Nerves! Did they not think Debo's father also had nerves? What if one of his railroad bridges should fall because *his* nerves were upset?

He tried to smooth it off with a fond joke:

"Annie dearest, I really think the *only* thing I could bring myself to object to would be to your making some slight mistake as marrying some distressed youth yourself."

He could reconcile himself to Debo's step. Were Debo to marry

and settle in England she would establish a sort of way-station between America and Russia. It would bring all of them that much nearer to their native shores. No, he could not object.

Yet he attempted to wheedle out of the Whistler women something in exchange for his consent: he wanted Debo to be in Russia this coming winter. Just one winter, please! A few more months with him in St. Petersburg before he would lose her forever.

Perhaps it was selfish of him? Perhaps. If Anna thought so, he would instantly drop the plan, and she was to say nothing of it. For he would not pain Debo for the world. Nevertheless, provided her health would not be injured by it, such an arrangement would be a great comfort to her father. He would so try to strengthen her affection for him. He did not doubt it, of course not, but he had never till now felt what it was to contemplate her leaving him.

He had already considered going on a leave to England to see the family and take them back to Russia. Now, because of Haden's proposal, the Major would hasten his preparations. But he would not be able to start out without Kleinmichel's permission, and the Count had left St. Petersburg for Kiev two days before Whistler left for Moscow. The Count must be in Kiev by now; he would doubtless do his duty toward the Major.

Whistler wrote to Kleinmichel; he was fortunate enough to find a friend, aide-de-camp to Grand Duke Michael, who in his turn knew an aide of His Majesty's. The friend's friend took the letter, promising to deliver it to Kleinmichel immediately upon the aide's arrival in Kiev, on or about Monday the twentieth.

There was nothing to do now but wait in Moscow for the Count's answer and go on writing to Anna.

IV

At Preston, Debo locked her hands with graceful determination. Anna waited to hear from the Major, and her anxiety grew. How would Whistler take this tremendous event, how would he regard the new son? At least at first he would be inclined to blame Anna. No doubt. He would charge her with hastiness in

this matter, he would suspect that she had matchmade the whole thing to remove Debo from their family. Anna's spirits were at the lowest ebb when Alicia went out, hoping to bring to her sister a letter from Russia.

Instead, on the way to the post office, Alicia was stopped breathless by the large white familiar letters GWW. They were upon the trunks which a porter was wheeling across the street from the railroad station. She leaped forward, in the piteously comic way of a highstrung old maid, as if in a clumsy attempt to embrace the trunks. But behind them walked up Whistler himself, ready to receive her into his courteous, restrained arms.

This public exhibition of feeling made him uncomfortable, made him shrink from his normal size and stature, and he was eager to escort Alicia away from the curious glances of passers-by.

How welcome was the sudden sight of him to all the household, but to Anna most of all! The spiral of her suspense unwound into joy with a tension nearly hysterical.

"It's almost too great for me!" she exclaimed.

Debo rushed to his side, and he was delighted, while Anna looked on in a queer mixture of relief and jealousy. How well he looked! How animated and sweet were his questions and comments! All at once an incredulous shocked shadow crossed his handsome face. What, Thursday was to be the wedding day? But this was Monday already! He could not give his newly found daughter away so soon. And besides, he was acting as the Tsar's special envoy—precisely on Thursday he was expected in the embassy at London with the government's dispatches which he was carrying.

So the wedding was postponed until Saturday.

And even at that, it was strange to go ahead with wedding plans this tense week. Lancashire was passing through a vale of troubles: for want of orders twenty factories had closed in the vicinity of Preston alone; there were discontented spirits among the unemployed, and a disturbance was likely at any moment. A delegation of textile manufacturers and other substantial citizens called on old Mr. Winstanley to discuss measures of precau-

tion. Startling indeed would the wedding bells be against such times of tremors.

V

On Thursday the Major was in London. For company's sake he had taken Jimmie along. Forewarned, Seymour Haden appeared in Major Whistler's hotel. Their first meeting was painfully formal.

Jimmie noted that his father did not like Haden; loyally, the boy conceived a dislike for the man. Haden did nothing to charm away the cloud. On the contrary, the future brother-in-law patted Jimmie on the shoulder with a disgusting condescension:

"It's high time the boy was going to school."

When the father and son were alone, the boy said crossly:

"He's just like a schoolmaster, isn't he?"

All day long Whistler drove about London on his business, and Jimmie was with him. In the evening Seymour rejoined them, and all three journeyed to Preston.

They arrived late when the house was asleep. The sole exception was Anna's lighted window. They threw pebbles at the bright panel, frightening Anna out of her wits. She thought that Preston's workless hands had at last risen in rebellion and were attacking the house! Shaking all over, she aroused the old master. Mr. Winstanley was a fantastic sight, a Russian shuba—Whistler's gift—over his nightclothes, as he tiptoed forward to investigate.

Soon Jimmie's voice reassured them; there was the cheerful rattle of bolts unfastened, the flutter of the awakened Debo hastening to greet her lover; and the family buzzed like bees stirred out of slumber.

Whistler alone was gloomy. Friday, the day before the wedding, he remained in bed. The approaching separation from his Debo made him ill—the thought of his little girl becoming another man's woman troubled him revoltingly.

But the girl was oblivious of all save her darling Seymour. The two shut themselves up in a little parlor where Debo with an

ecstatic diligence scribbled as Seymour gravely dictated the names and addresses of his hundred-odd friends. The bridal cards rose in neat piles—these fateful messages announcing that after a certain date Mr. and Mrs. Francis Seymour Haden were to be at home in the very house of his birth, 62 Sloane Street, London.

What price her father's silent agony!

Relatives of both sides descended upon Preston to make a vortex of what had so far been a well-spaced series of preparations. With an effort Whistler rose and dressed. But, as he bowed to the newcomers, he continued to be chary of words, heavy of step. An awkward silence fell upon the gathering. Emma Main-gay could stand it no longer, and edged over toward Anna to whisper: "For mercy's sake, let us propose music!"

VI

October the sixteenth was the sunniest day possible in England. The night before everything had been readied, so that not a moment would be lost on Debo's wedding day. Everything should be like clockwork, Anna admonished.

The bridal breakfast was prepared in fine style. To begin with, the health of the young pair was proposed in champagne. Anna made a desperate effort not to protest against such frivolity. Champagne at wedding-time—the very sacrilege against which she had inveighed in Russia!

Whistler had been silent up to this moment, but as the drink sparkled in the glasses, he did a strange thing. Raising his eyes to Mac's portrait that hung over the mantelpiece directly opposite the seats of the newlyweds, he said: "Let us next drink to the health of our brother, who would I am sure take a lively part in what now engages us if he could be here."

Did he mean to say that Anna's favorite brother would have taken a lively part in this champagne drinking? If he did, the acrid jest was lost on the assembly. At least, no one showed that the toast was so understood.

Anna was too distressed by Whistler's downcast state to seek hidden thoughts in his words. Her husband was heartbroken at

losing his daughter to this suave young man. Dutifully Anna tried to be in Whistler's mood.

And now that the sad solemnities were over, and the time came for the young couple to start on their bridal tour to the Welsh hills, Debo bade good-by to Whistler and Anna and the two boys without a single tear. Her eyes shone with happiness. A free being at last!

VII

By the last boat of the navigating season Whistler brought his diminished family back to Cronstadt and St. Petersburg. Nurse Mary was with them; after a short visit with her folks in Ireland, the maid was quite satisfied to return to Russia and its terrors.

There were, however, fewer terrors than they had pictured. In fact, Russia seemed like a home. Anna said she could not have imagined it would be so delightful to return to their English Quay apartment, for in all their travels no place had proved so comfortable. During the summer the flat had been thoroughly painted and papered. Double windows were in, the carpets down, and fires cheerily burning in the grates.

Anna's servants came back with happy smiles and bows. They had either taken temporary positions in her absence, or had kept themselves unemployed waiting for the Whistlers' return. She brought them presents: a new blue cloth roundabout, a pair of white gloves, an English blanket-shawl, a pretty English cap with bordering of net and ribbons enough to trim three. A merry hum of activity sounded throughout the house as the servants resumed the old routine. Even the family cow came back, looking slicker than ever after a summer on the Eastwicks' meadows at Alexandrovsky.

Friends and acquaintances descended upon Anna with an excited flurry of questions about Debo, also with their own news. Did Anna hear of Thomas Winans' marriage? Yes, late in August he had wedded Celeste Revillon, a Russian of French-Italian blood. Soon Winans brought his bride to Anna. There were parties, dinners, present-givings. New faces appeared in the

American colony and the British Factory, and Anna found them either pleasant or pious or both. Ralph Ingersoll was the new American envoy taking Todd's place, and a well-behaved body was he, not traipsing around the capital in nigh-childish capers the way the Kentuckian used to do. Ingersoll's secretary was his own son, Colin, and he too was a fine man. Both were welcome at the Whistlers' board, coming without ceremony and staying for hours.

VIII

But Whistler was uneasy. He knew what Anna did not. Outside the mansions and the palaces, ill wind was at large: not only the ebbing cholera but also the rising unrest of the peasants.

Throughout the year 1847 disquieting news and grim people came from the province of Vitebsk, the boggy region of crop-failures and of poverty-stricken ditch diggers. Ten thousand mouzhiks left their native villages and marched eastward. For they wrongly heard that in Central Russia bondsmen had been liberated, and that whoever wished a freeman's status was merely to go toward Moscow, and there you were—a slave no longer. Come and gain your freedom for the walking and the asking, O serf!

Another fascinating rumor had it that a serf would be given liberty upon completion of three years' labor on the railroad. And so these Vitebsk peasants sold their cattle and bread, left their huts, and walked east in the direction of the iron way, a ragged but stubborn host. They were said to have been encouraged by some unscrupulous merchants of the near-by Pskov province who bought for a pittance the migrants' miserable property. The peasants knew that their lords would try to stop them, and so they made lances out of their plowshares, and armed themselves with cudgels and scythes, with slings and steelyards and cobblestones. The rural police and the invalid-soldiers sent against them from provincial seats could do nothing but retreat. The horde marched on. A priest was sent out to reason and persuade. The peasants listened, then replied:

"Little Father, God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, but we are still there."

On they went, the able-bodied men and women in front, the old men and pregnant women and children in the rear. A detachment of the Tsar's forces made a stand; there were clashes, in one of which the marchers captured and belabored a police officer. Later they agreed to release him in exchange for the right to tell their grievances to the Governor of Pskov.

When they saw the Governor they dropped their weapons and fell upon their knees and kissed his feet, crying:

"Kill us, but we won't go back to our landlords!"

A battalion of carabineers was dispatched against the rioters. A regiment of grenadiers was held ready. Nearly six thousand men and women were rounded up and convoyed back to their desolate villages. One hundred and thirty men and eleven women of those who reached the railroad were caught later, and after a severe birching were also returned home.

But other groups of peasants continued to march, their feet ill-shod or bare, their forms emaciated, their eyes burning with hunger and belief that freedom was near, that it was beyond the horizon where shining metals were being laid. In towns and villages brass bells boomed morosely as if complaining of their old age and these evil times. Additional companies of soldiers were hurried, told off to this road and that, and finally all barriers were secure, all the rebels stopped and dispersed or captured and punished. The strange flare-up was at last reduced to mere embers.

Nevertheless, trouble still hung in the air, rumors floated disturbingly, the Empire was awakening. And not only this East, but the West of Europe was also restive.

Ugly days were in the offing.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

THE news of the February revolution in Paris came like a gross and jarring thunderclap.

The Tsar and his court were celebrating the Butter Week. A crowded stream of daily balls and other festivities was to terminate on Sunday night with a *folle journée* in the heir's palace. But on Saturday the Tsar received a telegraphic dispatch from Warsaw: Riots in France! Abdication of King Louis Philippe in favor of his grandson, the little Count of Paris! The boy's widowed mother, Duchess of Orleans, to be the regent!

The news quickly spread over the capital. People talked and wondered. Would the riots stop with the regency? The Tsar's brother Michael gloomily predicted: "You'll see that in two months they'll have a complete revolution."

He made an error of two months.

On Sunday the scheduled ball took place. The heir's palace was alive with myriad lamps and candles competing with the white shoulders and blinding jewels of the fair dancers, with the gold and silver of the men's uniforms. In an instant all heads turned as the main door leading from the inner chambers was flung open. The Tsar appeared.

He looked somber, and a paper was twitchingly clutched in his hand. With the many eyes upon him, Nicholas reached the center of the ballroom and gave a sign. The music stopped in the midst of a bar. All stood still and frightened. After a pause, came the Tsar's raspy voice:

"Saddle your horses, gentlemen: a republic is proclaimed in France!"

The King had fled from Paris; the revolutionary disease, as in 1789, would wild-fire to all corners of Europe if not checked and stamped out in season. And he, the Tsar of All the Russias, the commander of untold legions, he would play the knight slaying the red dragon.

Nicholas had never liked Louis Philippe—didn't the man of

Orleans come to the French throne as the result of the revolution of 1830? The Tsar had always suspected the bourgeois King of carrying on intrigues against the principles and actions of the Russian monarchy: "He attempted to undermine and ruin my position as Russian Emperor. This I will never forgive him."

To flee for his life in 1848—what well-deserved justice for the usurper of 1830! Before a group of grand dukes and courtiers Tsar Nicholas gloated:

"What do you say about it? Now of course the comedy is played and ended, and the knave is down. It is almost eighteen years since I was first burdened with that imbecile, since I said that his crime would yet find its punishment in this world. What I foresaw, has happened! It serves him right—fine, lovely! He goes out using the door of his entrance!"

On the ballroom floor he walked nervously from one end to another, everywhere talking, exhorting, explaining, and recalling his old prophecies. He smiled with particular favor at commanders of guard regiments, but as he talked to them he added:

"I give you my word that not a drop of Russian blood will be shed on account of those scoundrelly French."

Why, then, saddle horses?

Germany was the answer.

For this was a Romanov speaking, one of the dynasty in whose veins by this time little Russian but much German blood flowed. This was Nicholas I threatening, the kinsman and self-styled protector of the Prussian, Württemberg, Baden, Saxe-Weimar, and other big and small royalty. The kings and princes of the Germanies resented his arbitrariness, his harsh barking orders, but there seemed to be no choice for them. He was their guardian and paladin now that the French rooster was raising its fiery cry, now that the *Marseillaise* once more rang on the other side of the Rhine. A young German Jew named Karl Marx wrote crystal-clearly that the pillar of European reaction, the stumbling block on the path of the revolution in the Germanies, was Tsar Nicholas I with his armies. The Tsar, hating the writer, nevertheless agreed heartily and took the charge as a compliment.

That was why Russian officers' horses were to be saddled.

II

The next day was Pure Monday—the first of Lent's forty-odd days—but the usual mournful quiet was lacking. Well-furred noblemen galloped from house to house, carrying the news, asking for fresh details in return, suggesting, discussing, foretelling. The superstitious remarked: "Well, it's the leap year, you know."

The few newspaper offices of the capital were besieged by inquirers, but the editors themselves knew little and said less, for at this moment, more than ever before, they feared the Tsar and his censors.

Through the snowy streets top-booted gendarmes were herding all the Frenchmen that could be found in St. Petersburg. Most of these were meek civilians, and their pallor was deep even after the chief of gendarmes, to whom they were brought, tried to reassure them in their native tongue. In the name of the Tsar he announced that the French in Russia would have the law's protection, provided they preserved order among themselves and attempted no subversive action. However, should they wish to leave Russia, the gates were wide open.

News continued to come from the tumultuous abroad, astounding and unpleasant to the Tsar: Riots in the Germanies, Metternich in flight!

Nicholas was sick with a nervous exhaustion. He looked around for guard, for support. The nobles? But they were either stupid or liberal. Just the same, there was the Russian folk-saying: "When there are no fish in the river, a crayfish is also a fish."

And so he called upon the nobility as the sturdy fence around his throne. He said he was one of them. For was he not in his personal right a landowner in the province of St. Petersburg? Was he not the first landlord in the Empire? To a deputation of nobles he spoke a mealy-mouthed piece, whining with promises to preserve serfdom, refuting rumors of its oncoming abolition. Russia was theirs to own and rule: "I have no police, I do not like them. You are my police."

Here he was, the Tsar in undress. He had only imagined him-

self a strong, fearless, proud man. Here he was, losing his wits in a difficulty, ready to beg, to complain, even to weep in despair—as indeed he was shortly to do. Blight was ahead for his reign. Seeing himself as a being apart from himself, as a symbol and God's deputy rather than a man of flesh, he would soon tearfully pray on a parade ground, the casque off his head and held in a supplicant's gesture: "O Lord, grant victory to Emperor Nicholas, son of Paul!"

The outside world little knew of his uncertainty and fears. Karl Marx continued to name him the great menace to the world's liberty. A caricature was catching the fancy of the reading public at home and abroad. Three bottles stood before you: one, with champagne, was bubbling over in a dynamic fountain, in the upshooting spurts of which you could discern the discarded and perishing crown, throne, king, princes, and cabinet ministers; another held beer, black and thick, out of which a duller cascade threw out archdukes and dukes preceded by a king; but the third was with vodka, its cork intact and kept down securely by a rope sealed with a double-headed eagle. The first bottle was France; the second—Prussia; the third—Russia.

In his cocky talk as well as in such caricatures Tsar Nicholas tried to regain courage. He would fight, he cried. To an old Russian prince he said that within two months he would send to the Rhine no less than three hundred thousand troops. Victory for his triune godhead of Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality!

"And have you the money, Your Majesty?" the prince asked. "The money without which no one can fight?"

"Money? You found money—the money with which you and Tsar Alexander fought Napoleon. So will I find money."

"But, Your Majesty, do you not know that we fought on other people's money? England showered us with subsidies. But now—do not try to ask her! She won't give a farthing."

Oh yes, England. Alexander's friend but his enemy. Yes, Nicholas had to be careful. He must search about for other ways. So, irritably, he curtailed all the expenses he thought could be cut or deferred. The railroad was the first among such items to come to his mind. The railroad could be finished later on, after he de-

feated his foreign enemies and their red flag. He would use for this war every possible ruble of the road-building funds.

III

Early in the spring the Tsar's troops began their westward march. But their movement was slow and cautious. The Tsar spoke his speeches and wrote his ukases, but not as threateningly as before. To guard, not to attack, such was his explanation as he gave the troops their marching orders.

He hated halfway measures. He wished he had enough money and nerve for a big-sized quick-tempoed war. The news from Germany, from his royal relatives in Berlin and elsewhere, was insult and torture. He gritted his teeth as now one German prince now another gave concessions to the shouting and rising people.

On the last Sunday in March he made public a manifesto. Therein he informed his subjects that the West of Europe had lost its senses, that after the blessings of many years of peace it was in turmoil. Lawful authorities were threatened, and order was about to succumb to anarchy. Shockingly he showed how the revolt rolled from France to Germany; he spoke of the impudence which grew as the governments retreated before it. And now lol the destroying torrent entered the domains of his allies, the Austrian Emperor and the Prussian King, and even menaced—oh horror, oh insanity!—this Russia, this land entrusted to him by God.

“But it shall not be so!” He shook his fist.

He swore in that curious ukase of his, he promised to call the Almighty to his aid, and so prepare himself and the Holy Russ to meet the foe wherever the low scum raised its ugly threat. For faith, for the Tsar, for the fatherland! Every Russian must answer this call joyously. Together with their Tsar all must cry:

“God is with us! Do understand this, O nations, and submit: for God is with us!”

He was fascinated by his own writing, and gave it to his courtiers to read before he made it public. The courtiers wept out

of the brimfulness of their feelings as they shrewdly edited the document in a spot or two. Baron Korff, weeping, exclaimed: "What luck, what heavenly blessing, that in these awful moments Russia has you, Sire! You, with your energy, your soul, your love toward us!"

They all wept again, and the heir's children who happened to be in the crowd began to wail in sheer fright. The courtiers, halting their own weeping, flew to the children's side to calm the darlings.

IV

This spring of 1848 Anna felt that God was angry, that more than ever before men's sins weighed heavily against them, and soon there would be a reckoning. Men must stop and reflect and ask themselves in what they placed their trust. The wonder and portent of the revolutions stalking over the continent: France a republic, Prussia with only a nominal king, and crafty Metternich in flight! She entered in her diary the observation that many of the earth's nobles were escaping to that boasted soil of the free, to England, yet the isle too was filled with the spirit of rebellion and with troops bent on its suppression. She heard that at a great meeting of the Chartists in London many threatening remarks had been made against the expenses of the British royal family: "What entitled the queen-dowager to receive one hundred thousand pounds sterling a year while the wives and children of British subjects were starving?"

In the quiet of her room overlooking the Neva ice Anna prayed: "May God so overrule in the councils of Europe that a better state of society be ordered!"

Anna copied the French translation of the Tsar's ukase into her diary, partly to exercise her French, partly to preserve for Jimmie and Willie its historic sense. The ukase was read in all the churches on that last Sunday in March, and friends told Anna that the priests read the text with great effect, that every heart was made to throb with loyalty to the sovereign. She talked to her servants, and came to the conclusion that they regarded

Nicholas as God's representative sent from the skies to guard over his people. Matvei the porter, perhaps a bit livelier for a drink or two, bragged in the Whistlers' kitchen: "Shall we fight against God? No, we will spill our last drop of blood for our church and its head, our Tsar!"

It was a febrile Sunday. The Emperor was rumored to have come out to the populace several times during the day, walking or riding, each time in another costume of unusual brilliance. Crowds collected to cheer, especially when together with the Empress he appeared in an elegant carriage at the fashionable hour of promenade on Nevsky Prospect.

Swept by the excitement, the Whistlers hastened to see one of such appearances. This particular pageant took place on the New Boulevard where the imperial family were to enter a chapel. Many of the court accompanied the procession, but the diplomatic corps were not invited, and the police were strict in barring foreigners from the carefully marked circle. The younger Ingersoll was with the Whistlers, but even the green feather of his chasseur could gain them no privileges. Outside the circle, pressed on all sides by the silent crowd, the Americans watched the spectacle: the Tsar and the grand dukes in their white, blue, gold, and scarlet uniforms; the Tsarina's pages in white; the many ladies of the court in a rainbow of colors.

V

Market places of the capital swarmed with reservists called to the banners. They talked of a coming war, a war that was sure to be fiercer than the one of 1812. They were a lost people, they said as they sold their meager belongings and spent the money in drink.

And what would this war be about? Some said brash France was to fight bossy England, and the Tsar wanted to be in the scuffle too. Others spoke up that the Poles had scheduled an uprising for May the twelfth, and that the French were to help them against the Russians. But there was a republic in France, was there not? Yes, brothers, there was, and this was how it happened: The

Tsar lent some money to Louis Philippe, but when the time was up the French King refused to pay. The Tsar wrote to the French people, so and so, gentlemen Frenchmen, your King doesn't pay his debts, please make him pay me. Well, the French people thought it over and decided that the Russian people and their Tsar were in the right. And so the French people began to bother their King: Why don't you pay? Pay! The King, the sly one, ran away with the money. The French people were angered by such disloyal actions of their King. After talking among themselves a while longer they decided to re-publish the whole story of the unfaithful King. And that was how the French re-public happened.

These rumors, these stories, were brought to headquarters by numerous gendarmes who had been sent out to mingle in disguise with the reservists, the officers, the students, the factory hands, and the serfs. One agent was alarmed by a sudden popularity of a booklet on stenography. Why did so many young people all at once buy the little book? Was this newfangled stenography not a means of secret correspondence among revolutionaries? Another secret-service man brought in a sexton who had dared to discuss the West European events and add that the Tsar's government never accounted to the people in its expenditures.

"Here, for instance, we have sixteen palaces, and what for are they?" the sexton asked. "And what great millions of rubles they cost!"

A student, walking down Nevsky Prospect, was talking to his friends about the French republic and the Prussian King. A gendarme in mufti heard him say: "This is exactly how it's necessary to begin."

He was taken, of course.

VI

If to the nobility it seemed that the last day had come, if foreign revolution was to the lords "that moral cholera," the students and their kind hailed the tidings from the West. They and their

brethren—those who taught school or wrote in journals for the means of life—they had ached with the world's troubles, and now were ready to rejoice at its deliverance. Their robust dreams were coming true!

They did not act, however. They merely talked, and this mainly among themselves. Dostoyevsky and his friends continued to meet at Petrashevsky's Fridays, listening to speeches on Fourier and socialism, but as before they were (to use a sneer of their latter-day critics) babblers by trade.

The government knew of them, and a spy was reporting their minutes. In a year's time the gendarmes would feel the reports were complete enough to arrest the entire group.

Belinsky, the consumptive writer, the flaming prophet of the red dawn, was more dangerous. His work and word were spreading all over Russia, awakening young minds from premature slumber, injecting hope, and thus—who knew?—perhaps inciting rebellion. In the spring of 1848 gendarmes were sent to his flat to take him, but the white plague preceded them. The man was coughing his last breath away; plainly, he was dying and could not be moved. Soon he was dead.

In the Academy of Fine Arts feeling was bitter and talk heated. News came that Alexander Ivanov, one of the better-known Russian artists in Italy, spoke of those Western revolutions with a shudder. Were their principles to triumph, art would be ruined forever. So he said, so he orated. Other artists felt differently. Serf-painters wielded their brushes with a secret hope of early liberation for Russia, with a vision of an imminent gift to them personally of freedom and human dignity. These talked little; it was too dangerous. But their freeman friends raised voices in opposition to such views as were spewed by Ivanov. Views? The Tsar's Russia had no viewpoint—it had nothing but a swordpoint.

Rumors were presently heard that because of the Western revolutions all Russian universities and other higher schools would soon be closed and discontinued. A new kind of patriotism was among the nobles, patriotism which derided everything stemming from the West, arts and sciences not excepted. The West was a garbage pit, said a chief of gendarmes. Russia was so strong

and devoid of revolutionary spirit because she harbored the true Greek Orthodox faith, which would suffice even if the arts and sciences were to be abolished. The patriots of this sort said that France declared herself a republic and Germany seethed with unrest solely because they had fostered physics, chemistry, astronomy, poetry, and painting.

Along the railroad's work-line Baron Tisenhausen knew through his spies exactly who of the officer-engineers followed the events in France and the Germanies; precisely who were in the habit of reading *La Presse*, the only Parisian journal allowed in Russia; just what they thought and said about the Western leaders.

Spring was at last here, but work on the line was in small starts only. The engineers and workers sullenly watched the troops move past the labor camps: this was their money marching by, their salary money, the funds diverted from the railroad.

Railroads? Factories? Dangerous things in such unsettled times! So said the Tsar's advisers. Governor Zakrevsky of Moscow submitted a proposal to prohibit building new factories in Russia. Three years earlier Nicholas had issued a law declaring strikes a felony. Now the governor begged to eliminate the working class entirely:

"The government should not permit the concentration of homeless and immoral people, easily attracted to any movement aiming at the destruction of the public and private tranquillity."

Everywhere the censor used his pencil as boldly as the gendarme his arresting arm. The navigation opened, and the regular mails were resumed, but to escape censorship the Whistlers continued to avail themselves of the English courier service for their connection with the outer world.

Chapter Thirty

IN THE middle of May unseasonably hot weather came, so hot that the Whistlers could venture out to walk only before breakfast or after tea. They opened the balcony door to admit the welcome breeze from the Neva. Once again they were homesick after the States and England. Anna wept as she read letters from the dear ones, and even in Whistler's eyes there gleamed moisture as he listened.

The boys had a new tutor, a Monsieur Biber. Jimmie continued with his drawing, and the Major proudly used him as a full-fledged delineator of engineering prints and pictures. It was almost in the capacity of an expert whose opinion was solicited that Jimmie accompanied his father to a Russian artist's studio: Whistler had his portrait painted as a birthday present to Anna.

Rheumatic fever would from time to time waylay Jimmie. On the first Saturday in June he was so poorly that Anna became alarmed. She watched at his bedside day and night, first in the far back-chamber, then in her own room facing the Quay, whither she had moved him because it was quieter. Whistler was expected in Moscow, but he postponed the trip until he was certain that Jamie was well enough to negotiate the distance from the bed to the easy chair.

Whistler decided to take Willie along. But there was a recurrence of cholera in Moscow's narrow winding streets, and so he tried to soothe Anna by promising to limit his stay in the old capital to but a few hours.

On a Monday night Anna wished them godspeed. The heat was considerable, but Whistler included in the luggage warm clothing for the boy and himself. Wisely so, for the next evening dirty weather came, with gusts of rain and hail and in some places snow whitening the ground.

II

Most of May and the first part of June the city of Peter was oafish with merrymaking. The news of cholera careered nearer and nearer—it seemed as if the whole land were contaminated and at its last gasp—yet in St. Petersburg the early-summer festivals were never so gay.

Everywhere, on all the islands of the new capital, in all its suburban groves and gardens, music poured and beat. There were the usual military bands, and there were also orchestras made up of foreign players. At Pavlovsk, Grand Duke Michael arranged a fete, to which Gerstner's railroad brought endless crowds. In front of the palace numerous folk-groups danced and sang, a sunlit mass of agile humans. These were the Duke's serfs as well as Moscow gypsies brought here at a high expense. In the garden a soldier's band clashed and trumpeted, while at the railroad station the famous Gungl orchestra sugared the air.

Into this festivity the first case of cholera in St. Petersburg burst like the initial shell of a besieging host: a long-haired sexton, newly arrived from Novaya Ladoga, was taken ill. Much to his and everyone else's surprise he recovered, but three days later new cases became known. There were deaths. Beginning with the twentieth of June the epidemic was in earnest. Hundreds fell ill daily, and of these more than half died.

Horror seized the capital. People fled alone or with families, but many clung to their cumbersome bric-a-brac, afraid to leave it behind, trusting to prayer, and hating the doctors. Laborers were empty-handed enough to leave the minute the danger was sounded, but their journey was on foot, their victuals were of the poorest, and so the cholera struck them on the way, and there were many dead by the roadside.

Anna turned to Doctor Rogers for help and encouragement, but after his own recent 'flu he was weak and could do nothing of consequence. Soon he sailed for England. Bidding adieu he said to Anna he was glad Jimmie was convalescing, but the

boy must not remain in Russia for long, in fact none of the Whistlers must: "Soon we will meet in London, I hope."

Panic was within Anna every time she thought of Whistler and Willie. Perhaps they too had been seized with the dreaded cholera, perhaps they were calling for her in spasms and delirium—now, this very minute. . . .

The steady rollcall of death among her acquaintances made her feel unreal, non-living. Rumors were wild, and even her sensible cook, who read her Bible and feared God, came from the market with the news that cholera had been caused by poison, that the Poles—those enemies of the Tsar—had been throwing evil pow-



A St. Petersburg Dinner in Cholera Time

Host: But, friends, what is this panic about? It's only cauliflower
being served to you!

From *Yeralash*, 1848

ders around the vegetable shops and into the river. The cook came without food, for she would not buy even from the greengrocer with whom the Whistlers had dealt for the last five years. Anna tried to shame and calm the woman, to lead her to a higher source: "Put your trust in God, Maria! Follow our good doctor's advice about diet. Humbly rely on the Ruler over all for a blessing! He has an answer to our prayers!"

Jimmie duly interpreted the exhortation into the Russian, to no avail.

Twice Anna wrote to Whistler, but there was no reply. From his silence she tried weakly to derive a hope that he and Willie were hurrying back, that they were on their way home.

Indeed, toward the end of June, on a depressing midnight, just as she was rising from her knees and wiping her tears away, there they were—the two of them, father and son, standing at the door of Jimmie's sick-chamber, wondering how he was but afraid to disturb him. They turned to smile at her, to tell her that they had driven in a few moments ago.

How happy she was to rouse Ivan the servant with the order to start the family samovar going! Nurse Mary was asleep, and Anna would not wake her. With her own hands Anna prepared the beds and food, fed the two travelers, and bathed Willie. The boy said he had been terrified by cholera, yet—wonder of wonders—he seemed to Anna fatter than ever!

III

Off to England with you, said Whistler once more—just as he had done the year before.

Anna and the boys sailed early in July, on the ship *Camilla*. It was full of foreigners: an Italian countess, a Danish gentleman, a French noble, the two Ingersolls with their French cook, and a striking figure of a Hindu whose portrait Jimmie immediately sat down to draw.

At Copenhagen the steamer was held up. The green flag of quarantine was hoisted over the vessel, and the shore authorities would take papers from the captain in no other way except with

tongs; they smoked the papers thoroughly before they would open and read them.

Otherwise it was a calm passage, and Anna said that you could always depend on the Lord to temper the wind to the shorn lamb. The Whistlers arrived in London on Monday night, July 10, 1848.

Debo soon met them, a well-poised woman, victory in her eye as she greeted the stepmother. Anna in her return critically inspected the young couple and their house at 62 Sloane Street. She found all well ordered; she said Seymour and Debo were truly one—their tastes in perfect harmony and a wholesome cheerfulness in full reign. She sighed: "I only miss one comfort in their home—family worship."

She knew better, however, than to try to run Seymour. Alone or, more often, with the boys she went church shopping, and her heart was placidly joyful when she chanced upon a sermon that seemed practical and elegant both.

IV

Cholera raged along Whistler's line. A serf felt spasms in his body, his head whirled, he vomited with foam, his bowels were terrifyingly loose—and the man was gone. Drove of them died. Priests were busy singing funeral services in the dark of night which their assistants' torches did little to dispel. Ah brother, let us have a glass of vodka! To hearten themselves to the ghastly labors, the petty popes and their aides filled their bellies with drink. To stop the disease, soldiers filled the graves with lime.

But the plague was like a flame in the wind. Serfs ran off in all directions. Kraft reported his men's flight to Kleinmichel, asking: "Shall I hold them by force?"

Kleinmichel responded: "Try to convince them that in their villages they would be at a greater risk of contagion than at the railroad works where we have all the necessary means to doctor them which they would not find on their journey home. Should they nevertheless persist, let them go, but first make them sign obligations that later on they would come back to complete their tasks."

Roads were barred, and the serfs were smoked by soldiers

before they were permitted to proceed into the interior. Those who were bound for St. Petersburg had to undergo an especially rigorous fumigation. Even the local peasants carrying food and fodder to the capital were stopped and smoked. Tsarskoye Selo and Peterhof were surrounded by troops of the imperial guards: the Tsar was not to be endangered even if the people were to die by the tens of thousands. Kleinmichel locked himself in his St. Petersburg palace and would neither leave it nor permit his householders to step out.

In both capitals streets were thronged with regiments that continued to march toward the western borders; with funeral cortèges of the cholera victims; with religious processions of priests and their lesser-folk parishioners praying to God for a surcease; and, suddenly, with the surge of nondescript mobs yelling against doctors who, the rumor was, together with the Poles poisoned poor people's food and wells, thus bringing the cholera.

It was time for action. And so the Tsar interrupted his sulking rest amid the fountains of Peterhof. For the nonce he would show true courage. He journeyed to St. Petersburg and rode out to meet the mob. Nicholas drew up to his full stature and shouted:

"Be meek and pray!"

Thus subdued, the mob turned back to churches, while His Majesty made a show of visiting butcher shops and telling the axe wielders to change their aprons for clean ones, to chase flies from the meats, and so defeat the cholera.

Throughout the summer people avoided eating fruit and vegetables, they shunned smoked and salted foods, and they would not drink kvas. And yet the disease swept all before it with a horrible steadiness. In six weeks fifteen thousand persons died in St. Petersburg alone. No one was immune, but most victims were plain folk.

V

In despair Whistler viewed his truncated work. These months he looked and felt aged. His long and somewhat aquiline nose now seemed the most pronounced feature. His face was long and

of swollen appearance, but the expression still preserved something of the erstwhile stanchness. The thick lips curled up at the ends. His hair was less flowing and attractive than formerly. By this time it was rather untidy, even though instead of the earlier pompadour he now preferred a parting on the left side. He looked a tired man. He was tired.

Years back, in the 1830s, he had had to cope with a cholera epidemic on one of his American lines. Irish shantymen and roustabouts died in just such spasms. But surely not in such numbers as these Russian serfs. Nor amid so much corruption and inefficiency.

Too much money from the railroad-building funds continued to be diverted to the military threat against the West. Too many laborers died of cholera, or fled in a wild stampede. Material for the railroad came in small or defective shipments. The bolts for bridges, manufactured by the late chief of the railroad *gendarmierie*, were finally discarded, but it took time to make better ones. The work lagged. There seemed to be hardly any progress at all.

At this time, over the Neva, a permanent stone bridge was being built. The popular rumor had it that the bridge was of flimsy construction; when overflowing, the river would easily tear the thing off its piers. The bridge would soon be completed but surely could not last. The railroad too would be finished, yes, but not in the life of this generation. Said the man in the street:

"The bridge we will see, but our grandchildren will not. The railroad our grandchildren will see, but we will not."

The bridge job was, however, in its final stages, and the Tsar, perhaps aware of the rumors, came to see it and to exclaim:

"These are works not of men but of giants!"

Later, at the opening of the bridge, he christened it the Bridge of Annunciation, and he pinned upon Harrison the ribbon and medal of St. Anne.

Throughout the ceremony Whistler worried about the bolts that he knew would be left over from the bridge job. Those were good bolts and could be used for at least a few of the railroad

bridges. Thus money would be spared for some other part of the railroad work. But Kleinmichel solved the problem in his own unsavory way: he sold the leftover hardware to a Colonel Ogarev, who happened to be a nephew of his, and this officer promptly resold it to the railroad, at a sizable profit.

Slimy graft hung to every transaction, and Whistler watched it with helpless eyes.

And it was at this period that a private train was being built against the future of the railroad's completion when the Tsar and his family would jaunt between the two capitals. For this purpose, interior decorators were invited from Lyons, France. The august train was of the same color as the uniform of the Tsar's gendarmerie: sky-blue. There were several salon-cars, one of which was to be used as the Tsar's anteroom; also a sleeping car, a dining car, a kitchen car with an icebox and a wine cellar; and a number of cars for the imperial entourage. Covered platforms connected these chambers-on-wheels. There were fireplaces. Fresh air was brought in by ventilator-chimneys of bronze, with weather-cocks and double-headed eagles on top. In the anteroom car the ceiling was padded with white satin, the walls were softened with quilted silk stuffs, the doors had mosaic work as their master feature. The furniture was upholstered with silk of the same hue as Kleinmichel's uniform coat collar: raspberry. A most prominent piece in this car was a combined clock-chandelier of bronze and Sèvres porcelain. In the sleeping car, walls were done in crimson, with a few mirrors and rose-colored draperies for contrast. On a rich rug stood boudoir chests and chairs of rosewood.

VI

In July, 1848, Anna and the boys were at the Isle of Wight, where Debo presently joined them. They found here a number of St. Petersburg friends and acquaintances, British and Americans and also a few Russians, who had fled from the danger.

Whistler wrote letters of no alarming details, but other men remaining in Russia advised their kin that the intensity of cholera was frightful, and the recipients of the messages brought

them to Anna. Did you remember the hundreds of cabmen waiting or clattering all over St. Petersburg? Scarcely a drozhky could be spotted now. Most of the shops at Gostiny Dvor were closed! The city, formerly so bustling, was but a ghost of its former self. All the peasantry fled from their quit-rent occupations in the capital, 140,000 of them! As they fled they perished of hunger and thirst, for the people of the countryside shut their doors and wells, and hardened their hearts against all comers from the infected cities. A million people died in Russia of this cholera!

Anna shuddered as she read or heard such news. God is my fastness! And so, while Jimmie painted and Willie worked flowers in wax, she went to all the churches and chapels she could discover on the isle. She prayed, observing and criticizing fellow worshipers, and comparing preachers as a racetrack follower would compare horses.

In August, the Tsar heard that the Hungarians were in earnest rebelling against their Austrian Emperor. Hungary was too near Poland; this meant real danger to the Tsar's domains. Nicholas issued orders to search homes in his western provinces for arms. Even children's bows and arrows were taken away. Butchers and cooks had to surrender their big knives; no more than a cleaver apiece was permitted to each shop and kitchen.

As leaves began to turn and cholera lessened its fury, some of the railroad serfs risked coming back to Whistler's line. But the overzealous gendarmes met them with birching and, prison-like, shaved half of each man's head. The punished men ran away again, and warned other serfs not to return.

Work was at a standstill.

In August, Whistler in his letters to Anna was a changed man. He wrote that he was ill with a cold and stomach trouble, though not with cholera, God forbid. The few remaining Americans were kind to take care of him, but there was little satisfaction even in going to the Gellibrands' dacha. He was desolate. Whistler plainly hinted that Anna return to Russia and look after him in his hour of weakness and need. Complacently Anna wrote back:

"Debo and Jemie are both benefiting by my stay here. In the evening we read aloud."

New letters came from Whistler, of a tone more desperate. Anna sighed and began to pack. Jimmie was to stay with Debo in London, but Willie would go back with Anna to cheer the lone and failing father.



“. . . the bridge we will see . . .”

The Bridge of Annunciation in St. Petersburg, built with the aid of Harrison and Whistler

From Sears, *Illustrated Description of the Russian Empire*

Chapter Thirty-One

A BLUSTERING tearing wind blew heaps of coppery leaves to the ground, and trees in St. Petersburg's gardens stood unclad and ashamed of their limbs. Cholera visited homes at a slackened pace, picking up victims overlooked in the summer. These fall weeks the upper classes seemed to be the preferred targets.

Whistler was stricken on a Sunday early in November.

It was morning, and Anna did not seem to be afraid, especially since at first she thought it was one of his usual attacks. The illness of the last summer had impaired Whistler's general health; he had ever since then been liable to catch colds, and his stomach had been so irritable that not a week passed without his being confined to the house for several days at a time. But when the seriousness of these spasms became apparent she hurried the servants after the doctor. Luckily he lived near by.

He came immediately and recognized cholera. In his skillful hands Whistler was eased, and as the spasms returned the doctor repeated the ministrations. The doctor stayed several hours, then left, then came again—four times in the course of the day and always saying where he might be found in the intermediate time should any of the subdued symptoms recur.

The Whistlers won the day. For a long time, however, the Major was extraordinarily strengthless. He could not even lift his head from the pillow. On the tenth day he was able to eat a morsel of chicken or beef and to receive his friends, but continued to be too unwell to attend to business matters. December came, and still he could not do much of anything. Even letter writing was out of the question. Perhaps when he once more was taken into the open air his health would return.

The weather was mild, but sledges had already taken the place of wheels, and presently the Neva ice was crisscrossed by traffic. Whistler left his bed, but was irritated to find himself too feeble to walk. He could sit up though, and he attempted to write letters to America but fell back exhausted all too soon. He could not

really collect his thoughts when he wrote, wasting his pitiful store of energy in polite and ineffectual figures of preliminary speech, and finally asking Anna to finish the messages.

As he lay staring at the ceiling he whispered to himself that he and all his should return to America even if he did not complete the railroad. Halted, thwarted in the midstream of his work! Yet it was not his fault that the railroad could not be finished. The general political disturbances and the lack of money, not Major George Washington Whistler, should be blamed. The work dragged along, and would drag for Lord knew how long. He could not be expected to remain in Russia in such a state of matters. He must take the boys back to their native land, to make them what they ought to be—Americans.

The family were so scattered! George William alone was in the right place—back in the States, experimenting with coal-burning locomotives for the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad, writing reports on his findings clearly and well. Debo and Jemie sent letters from England every fortnight; Anna was under the delusion that Seymour and her son got along, that Debo's husband was a delightful and improving companion to her darling lad, Seymour's example invaluable to Jimmie in the absence of his father. Willie, even though at home with his parents, was largely left to himself. A day-boarder in a St. Petersburg school, he was at the head of his class, seemed to be fond of books, and brought home tasks to learn. This kept him out of the way while the house bore the anxious stamp of a hospital.

II

To Whistler, repeatedly, Anna said that every prospect for his health was blessed, but much to his annoyance he could not regain enough strength even to stand up.

The new year of 1849 opened, January passed, here was February already, and still he was more or less ill. The cholera attack left deep wounds, as it were. He could eat but little that did not disagree with him. His legs were swollen. He did not take exercise because some days he did not feel like it, and others it was so

bitterly cold that no one could go out. That is, no one—Whistler weakly jested—who did not feel energy enough to hug the North Pole, and just yet he confessed no such desire. He was saying hopeful things in mournful tones. Idly he played with the impossible idea that if, within a week or two, the weather grew better he would go to Moscow. The journey might be of service to his health. If he did not get well soon, he would try a trip to Germany.

On February the twelfth he wrote to Joseph Swift of his desire to leave Russia even if he did not complete the road. Once he had a strong mind to finish the railroad, to stay in Russia to the end, but no more. Perhaps he should feel as if he had not accomplished the object for which he had come if he left before he rode over the entire line, but now he was anyway certain he would not have his wish. Would he be short and shorn of credit should he not see the final ceremony? The work he had done was creditable, and it was bogged not through his fault. He did not hesitate to claim credit; it would be strange if he were deprived of whatever reputation he rightly deserved.

He blamed the Russian government for the sorry state of the line. The road was almost done; it was a pity that the government was curtailing the means at the builders' disposal at the time it did. War expenses, bah! The Tsar's attempt to save the rebelling Hungary for the Austrian Emperor should not cost the railroad. It was true that the expenditures of the war office mounted to high figures, but, just the same, Nicholas could easily find eight or ten million dollars more to complete a task upon which some forty million dollars had already been spent. It was strange, Whistler said, how things were managed in Russia, how they were kept from appearing in their proper light.

Bad management alone made money scarce. The Major felt pretty sure, however, that this state of affairs would not last long. He was certain that in 1850 the means would be furnished. And with the necessary money the work could really be finished in a single season.

His health was poor, he could not wait. The work in 1849 would merely be creeping along instead of pushing on. Yes, he had just about made up his mind to leave, telling the government what he

felt—that unless the work went on to completion with more vigor he did not think they needed his services.

Thus circled his dispirited thoughts. But it was distressing to own up that he had not exactly succeeded in threading his—Whistler's—line through the difficult needle-eye of Russia.

III

Throughout March the Major felt so low that he had to remain in bed. The doctor visited him three times a day. He was optimistic but warned Anna that recovery might be tediously long.

Once Kleinmichel himself came to see Whistler. Otherwise the Count sent his own physician occasionally and couriers daily. The Tsar knew of the American's illness, but was so sure of recovery that he ordered Whistler to carry additional duties as soon as he got up. The American was to take charge of building a new extension to the mechanical establishment at Cronstadt where steamers of the navy department were to be constructed and repaired. Whistler said yes, he would assume the task, but not with any intention to be kept in Russia longer than he would have remained anyway to see the railroad completed. He wanted the government to have his full services, for which they were paying in any case. He confessed, however, that the offer was flattering; he was truly pleased to know that his services were sufficiently appreciated to be solicited. Vanity, yes, vanity, he smiled at himself feebly.

But he grew weaker as the weeks went by, and the doctors said he should be taken for a cure trip to Western Europe as soon as the navigation opened. Kleinmichel promptly brought the Tsar's permission to go.

How soon could they take him abroad? Anna sadly shook her head: from the continued frosts it could not be expected that navigation on the Baltic would open before the end of April. Spring was late because the winter had been so severe.

On Saturday, March the thirty-first, letters came from America, but Whistler was too low to bear the excitement of hearing from

home. He had been in pain, but now he was in undisturbed sleep and gentle perspiration. Quiet was essential, and at length his friends understood this, and ceased to call or send couriers or servants with inquiries.

The doctors said it was rheumatism, it was bad heart, it was general lack of life's comeback after the vicious onslaught of cholera. He had great difficulty in breathing, and the doctors were planning to relieve it by cupping between the shoulders. They realized that bloodletting would add to his debility, but feared there was no choice. In the meantime they filled him with quinine. His drinks were parsleyroot tea and Seltzer water; his only nourishment was chicken broth in very small quantities.

The patient's arms lay like pillows by his side, and his legs were just as puffed-up and powerless. For weeks he had to be shifted in a sheet from one side of the bed to the other. In daytime Anna called on her servantmen to help move Whistler, but at night his nerves were too unstrung to stand servants' hands, and Anna was obliged to lift him all by herself. Her own feet were beginning to swell from fatigue.

IV

At last the doctors said there was no hope.

Friends and familiars tiptoed into the house, huddling outside the dying man's room, talking in husky and strained whispers.

Whistler was dying. The realization of this came as a crushing weight; Anna was pierced by a feeling of anguish and rebellion, which, however, she quickly downed and smothered. She tried to relieve her husband's pain, but all the time she thought: "What are the sufferings of this transitory life compared to the joys of Eternity!"

To herself and to those who came with sympathy she insisted that she was not sorrowing. Such human beings as she—men and women who lived with hope and God's glorious reward—could not sorrow.

She prayed to God that her husband would show patience and submission to the heavenly will. He should know that he was

dying, and in his last days and hours she wanted him to be meek. He should be willing to die, even though the summons seemed so sudden. The nearer he drew to his end the more intensely she studied his agonized face and his few difficult words for signs of a newly begotten confidence.

"Confidence," she murmured, "confidence in your Redeemer's power over the grave."

V

The end came on April the seventh, at half past four o'clock in the morning. Friends bared their heads:

"One of nature's own noble men."

Kleinmichel said he was sorry. The Tsar sent to ask if there was anything he might do for the widow. Would she not leave her two boys in Russia, to be brought up as the Tsar's pages? The *corps des pages* was considered one of the most aristocratic schools in the Empire. It was full of swarthy or yellow-skinned youths, of almond-eyed boys, and of fair-haired noble-looking lads, who were sons of either subject-princes from distant provinces or of Russian and Baltic men of the highest titles. This offer was a signal honor indeed from the Emperor to the American woman.

But she moved her head in pitying negation. Perhaps it was an honor, but she and her boys were Americans. Americans could not be servants at any court. Their poor father would not have liked, she was sure, for his sons to grow up as pages of the Tsar. He wanted them to return to their native land. No, she would not leave them in this land of cold and calamity.

Well, then, the Tsar said, let the woman have his private barge for a trip down the Neva to Cronstadt and to the steamer. Also, since she wanted to send the body to an American cemetery, she was to have all the necessary facilities to that end.

VI

The weather was cold and bright, but by the tenth of April snow began to melt. Soon the streets were ponds of mud and of

chopped ice. The air became heavy and smelly, and cholera returned to claim from thirty to fifty lives daily.

Along the streets of icy bumps and watery pits gendarmes rode in a hurry, arresting the members of Petrashevsky's group. The spies had done a thorough job; all the reports were in; and now the culprits were being rounded up.

Among others, the ex-engineer, the self-torturing writer, Feodor Dostoyevsky, was brought to prison. It mattered not that by this time he had searched his mind to alter it, that he was a revolutionary no longer, but a turncoat to his more youthful fires. Like others of the group, he would be tried, and his sentence would be hanging. Like others, he would be brought to a plaza and made ready for the gallows, only to be reprieved at the very last moment, and bundled off to long years in Siberia.

In his sumptuous office Kleinmichel tore and threatened: among the department's petty employees he had discovered a brother of Dostoyevsky's. Out with him! He wanted no clerk, no engineer, no architect of a name contaminated by rebel talk.

A more agreeable task claimed his attention at the same time in choosing the American's successor. It should be another American, of course. A strange race those Yankees—they would not wear uniforms. But they were good at their jobs. They did not meddle in politics, for one thing.

Major Thompson S. Brown, yes, that was the man. As good as the late Major George Washington Whistler. Almost as good, the rumor had it. Good enough to finish the road, at any rate.

He must be brought from the States. At once.

VII

It was on the nineteenth of May that Anna and Willie sailed from St. Petersburg.

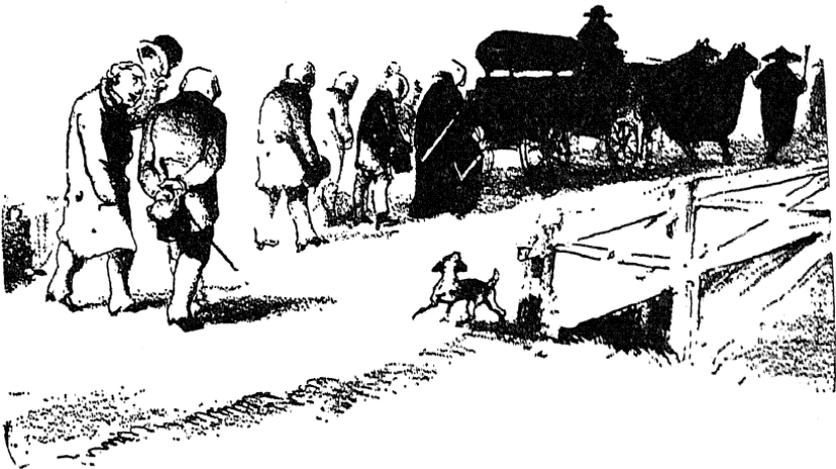
Suddenly it occurred to her that the day was the forty-ninth anniversary of Whistler's birth. She bowed her head:

"My grief is redoubled."

In London, Jimmie raised his head from the drawing board and pencils long enough to hear the shocking news, to weep at

the loss, and then almost absent-mindedly, his cheeks yet wet with tears, return to his art. More and more, in this world, nothing existed except himself and his art.

Russia was fast becoming but a memory. To his mother, as long as she lived, it would remain a nightmare, a morbid orbit. To him, it would ever be a dim-remembered but sharply felt dream, a never-ending reservoir of peculiar twilight tones and haughty attitudes . . .



From *Yeralash*, 1849

Epilogue

IN 1849 Russian generals improved upon the Prussian example of suppressing the free republic of Cracow three years earlier. This time not twelve but thirty thousand soldiers with all equipment were moved by rail from the Tsar's outposts in Poland to break the Hungarian revolt. The iron horse of the West brought the Tsar's soldiers as far as Göding in Moravia where they disembarked to join their allies, the Austrian army.

Such use of the railroad as a military weapon again impressed Tsar Nicholas. With Hungary thus quelled, with the entire West of Europe slowly but certainly beaten or tricked back into submission to its kings and princes old or new, the Tsar felt he could turn his time and money to the work of completing his own railroad.

In the fall of 1851 the railroad between St. Petersburg and Moscow was a reality. The line in its entirety was ready and open to the public. But the very beginning of its life was not auspicious: on a foggy night, through misunderstood signals, two trains—one coming from St. Petersburg and the other from Moscow—clashed head-on. Several engine drivers and mechanics were killed, one ministry blamed another, and the newspapers were forbidden to report the catastrophe.

The news spread nevertheless, and the public was timorous. Rumors went on their sinister rounds that the road was no good, that it would not and could not work. How, indeed, could you make such an involved instrument work on time, according to a schedule, with no mishaps? It was humanly impossible!

"Consider," the wisecracks said, "the hurry with which the railroad was built, also the inexperience of conductors. The conductors are likely to be drunk. They will be rude to passengers, surely. No, you won't see many people daring to break their necks by traveling on the railroad."

There were anecdotes about the dangers of the new road. Two

members of the Tsar's cabinet, whose mutual hatred was proverbial, were said to have come to the conclusion that either one or the other of them must go. Their dignity would not allow a duel, and so they decided to flip a coin, the loser to take a trip on the road as the best way of committing suicide. When the first train was to leave St. Petersburg, and a *Te Deum* was suggested, smart voices quipped: "Why a *Te Deum*, brothers? A requiem would be more in order."

Kleinmichel was in charge of the railroad, and so it could not be reliable. Two merchants cursed the Count's name repeatedly as with due care and hesitation they selected their seats in a railroad car. An officer, sitting near by and overhearing the curses, turned to ask sternly: "Be so kind as to tell me precisely what ill did Count Kleinmichel cause you that you swear at his name so violently? Have you ever seen him?"

One of the merchants replied: "Begging your pardon, sir, the devil too has never been seen by anybody, yet all curse him, and rightly so."

Customers were small in number and shy in spirit. On the other hand, the government did not seem to be anxious to encourage their travel. Each prospective passenger had to present his passport, also a special certificate from the police testifying that they had no objection to his leaving the city.

Travelers had to come to the train one hour before the time set for its departure. Inside the entrance to each station stood two gendarmes whose duty it was to see that on entering the premises everyone took off his hat. The hardy adventurer who wished to journey on the new rail had first to approach a table at which an official computed the price of the voyage. At another table the traveler was to weigh his baggage and pay the fare. All this time he was to keep the hat in his hand, never on his head. Their hands full of traveling bags or busy with money change, some passengers became exasperated enough to carry their hats in their teeth. Each one was like a dog fetching things for his master. The master was unseen yet omnipresent, he, Emperor Nicholas I. When they met friends they lowed greetings bull-like, afraid to open their mouths and thus drop the hats.

There was but one train a day for passengers leaving St. Petersburg and one leaving Moscow, each on the last stroke of eleven o'clock in the morning. Kleinmichel came every day to officiate at the departure of the St. Petersburg train. Hatless he walked through the halls of the station to make sure that all were bare-headed likewise. Nicholas Grech, a well-known writer of the time, watched the scene in much wonder. Spying in the distance General Shulgin, the Military Governor of the new capital, the writer approached him and respectfully reported that he had traveled much in Europe, that he had seen many a railroad of the West but never such an amazing ruling as this. The governor cried out in near-despair:

"But we are not in Europe! Judged by our geographic situation we are Europeans, true, but by our social customs we're sheer Asiatics!"

Lawrence Oliphant, the British traveler, making the rail trip from St. Petersburg to Moscow shortly after the line was opened, complained of the redtape but was amused by the Russian farewell as the train at last started—amused by those natives thronging the barrier, those weeping eyes and wet handkerchiefs "waving their adieux as ardently as if we were booked for Australia."

Conductors, engine men, firemen, and even porters wore military uniforms; many had helmets of brass. Their faces placid, their sabers jangling, the conductors moaned out instructions and asked for tickets. Oliphant was annoyed by the conductor in his car: "He seems to make the inquiry the first time to satisfy himself that you have got one, and afterwards merely as an amusement, which he apparently enjoys the more if he fancies you are going to sleep."

The train carried mail, and this was guarded zealously: posts of gendarmerie were established at intervals between stations, and a mounted gendarme rode hard for a distance of one or two versts trying to keep close to the mail car. As the train outsped him, another rider from the next post took up the race.

The cars of the first and second classes were covered and had seats; baggage was piled up on the roof. Few persons traveled

first-class, although at times a nobleman would engage the whole car for his family or friends. Third-class cars lacked roofs, and here passengers sat on benches under the open sky. Sparks flew from the locomotive, igniting their clothes and bags, so that to save themselves the least brave travelers crawled under the seats. At stations, special eyeglass masks were sold for the passengers' protection. But such open cars were but a borrowing from the Tsarskoye Selo road and were soon a thing of the past.

Buffers were yet unknown, and chains connected cars. At stops, cars bumped into one another with such impact that passengers fell off their seats. Officials feared that some travelers might be knocked off the train altogether, and so introduced between the cars a few platforms loaded with sacks of sawdust. Some travelers nevertheless took the trip as a great lark. Oliphant noted: "The men are bearded and dirty, and relate stories in a loud tone of voice, for the benefit of the whole company, most of whom have evidently never been in a railway before." The chief hardship was the prohibition of smoking on the train:

" . . . We arrive at a station. Everybody rushes out and lights a cigarette. We are to stop here ten minutes, and the people during that time walk up and down the platform and smoke; then we huddle into our old places. . . . At every station the same scene ensues. The unsmoked ends of the last station's cigars, having been carefully preserved, are lighted afresh, and vehemently smoked on the platform during five or ten minutes, as the case may be."

The two sides of each station looked exactly alike, and this led to errors when the Moscow-bound train met the St. Petersburg-bound one: people often got onto wrong trains. There was a Russian folk story of two friends who met in a train car. One said to the other:

"Good day to you, Ivan Ivanovich! Whither are you bound?"

"To Moscow, my sir. And you?"

"I'm going to St. Petersburg."

"Some invention, isn't it? Traveling to the opposite ends here we sit, in the same car!"*

Oliphant liked the spacious stations and the immense domes of engine buildings attached to each station. He was quick to note the American model of the railroad. But the Russian folk had no such understanding of the road's origin. It was a German invention, not an American one—so said the folk rumor, so sang the folk song.

In Moscow a broadside was issued, consisting of a picture and the song; the folk artist must have seen the railyards and railpaths and a locomotive or two before he beheld his first railcars. For he drew a pair of locomotives fairly accurately but the cars behind them altogether fantastically: not cars really, but a series of houses and barns on top the platforms. Beneath the picture one read the song:†

Near the Red Gates a miracle shone,
 To the left a marvel appeared alone;
 Enormous on an empty spot and high
 A great house in wonder grew to the sky.
 At the will of the sovereign, the wish of the Tsar,
 A house rose miraculous as a star.
 On top the house there stands a tower;
 Hourly there rings and hoots its power
 A bright self-chiming clever invention—
 Must be from overseas, too costly to mention!
 As you go in this startling yard
 You find much more, so be on guard.
 You find a great deal of something indeed!
 A road of iron like frozen speed
 Is there with beauty never seen—
 Marvels and miracles all come clean.
 In two long paths there lie hard rails;

* The story reappeared in the Russian folklore after the revolution of 1917 in this variant: "Marvelous thing this Marxism, isn't it? Traveling to the opposite ends here we sit, in the same car!"

† Translated into literal English by Albert Parry and rendered into verse by C. A. Millapaugh. The charming childishness of the Russian broadsides of the time is preserved in the translation and rendition. For the original of this broadside see the frontispiece of this book.

Along the paths machines with wails
 Run not with horses but with steam.
 Must be some terror out of dream!

Hardly you pay your money there—
 See—you are, as windy air,
 In half an hour or an hour, say,
 Two hundred versts away.

Ah, what a wondrous little horse!
 It has a giant's manner and his force.
 It hauls a thousand-weight of goods
 As if it were a batch of woods.
 Self-movingly, self-rollingly it wings,
 Most pleasant and profitable of all things.
 The horse stands still but snorts out loud—
 It snorts with sparks and steam.
 Then suddenly it boils like a samovar,
 But does not swing or shake or jar.
 It will move you all a-whirling,
 Its white steam spouting, high smoke curling.

Wherefrom is this horse, its power,
 This puzzling animal with its tower?
 The beast is strong the way it totes,
 For it eats wood and not just oats!
 Muchly of water it drinks all day,
 And yet we never heard man say
 It stops at all to take a rest.
 You blink your eye, and over the crest
 Into St. Petersburg it runs.
 Good for our horse, the rolling one!
 With Russian bravery it is rich!
 Now I must say that with no hitch
 It goes the whole journey in less than a day.
 Russian folk know the long long way—
 Six hundred versts from here to there,
 With towns and villages everywhere!

Well, what a happening came to pass!
 All were dumbfounded as one mass,

And there old Moscow shone! All tongues
Were tied in silence then, the old and young.
How clever are these folks who so
Could harness the samovar and make it go!

Now listen, Mother Moscow, while I sing
A word or two upon this thing.
The Germans built this beast that pulls,
Made a machine that goes with calls.
But no, little pigeons, *nicht wahr*, not theirs.
This samovar smells of Russian airs!

II

In the fall of 1851, Tsar Nicholas himself journeyed to Moscow—to celebrate a quarter-century of his coronation as well as the completion of the railroad.

Most of his troops were still in Hungary. He stripped St. Petersburg of the last remaining soldiers when, over the new road, he sent to Moscow several battalions of guard infantry and a few squadrons of élite cavalry. They were to precede him as weighty heralds of his advent. Also, they were to demonstrate the strategic importance of the road as a means of swift locomotion for troops.

Kleinmichel made several preliminary trips over the railroad, inspecting and scolding. Count Shuvalov, chief marshal of the court, and Doctor Mandt, the Tsar's personal physician, also tried out the railroad before they would pronounce it safe for the Romanovs.

The great day came. Down the rail slowly puffed the azure-blue train with the imperial pair, with the heir-apparent and his two sons, and with a goodly number of grand dukes and grand duchesses as well as generals and ministers and sundry officials. A batch of German princes sat and strutted along: Friedrich of Württemberg, Karl of Prussia, Peter of Oldenburg, Alexander of Hesse. Kleinmichel was secretly angered by their undue appetites, by their refusal to see at the stations anything except buffet counters stocked with wines from the Tsar's cellars.

Crowds gathered at stations to gape at the train and its august

cargo. At Vyshni-Volochek, people watched in awe as the Tsar emerged from his car and walked toward the locomotive. He was happy; turning to the folk, pointing at the wondrous machine, he said:

"Some horsie I've earned for myself, eh?"

At Spirovo he gazed long and fondly at the locomotive shed with its high iron dome, and at last exclaimed:

"C'est un Panthéon! C'est un temple!"

At each large bridge Nicholas halted his train and with the men of his entourage descended to the river. At his signal the train crossed the bridge, while below the Tsar tilted his head, admiring the novel and magnificent spectacle. Near Tver he could withhold himself no longer, and addressed the engineers:

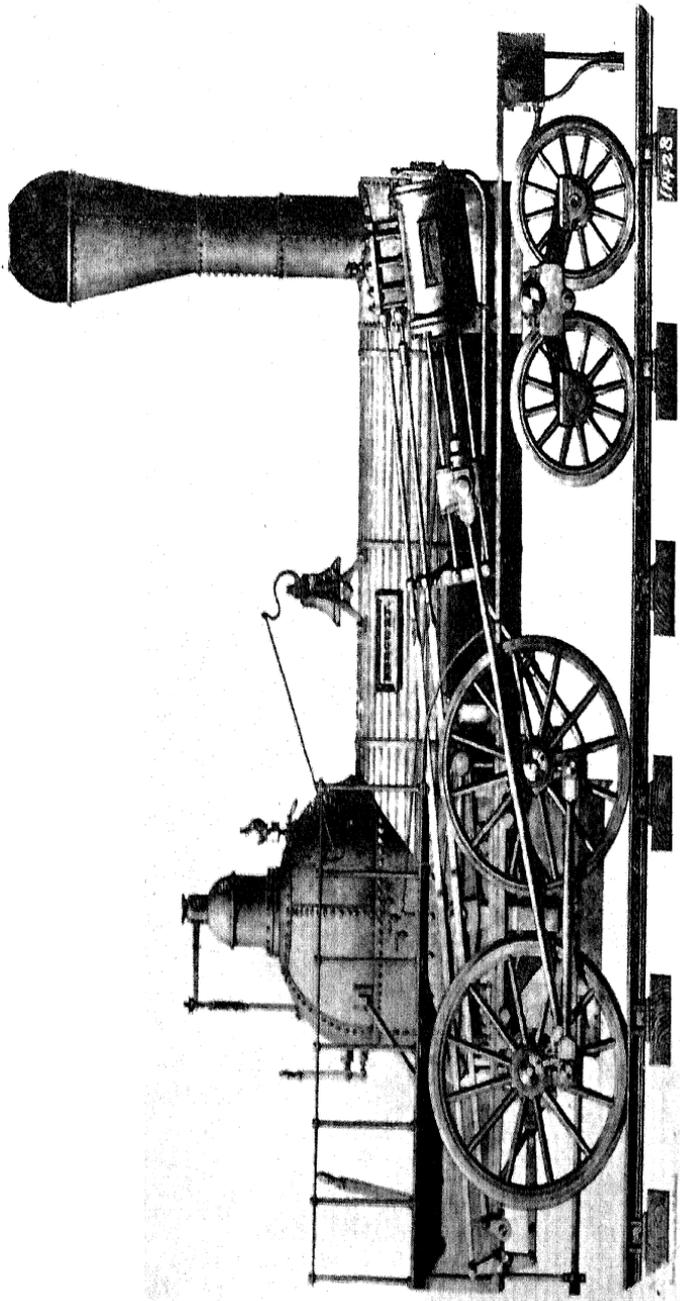
"Honor to you, gentlemen, honor and glory!"

But at the Verebyin Bridge, when the Tsar from below waved his large white handkerchief, the train remained motionless. William Winans was at the controls, aided by Bartner, his best locomotive man. At once jumping off, in worry and tremble, Winans searched for the cause of the mishap. There it was—the track! Black oily paint was covering the rails, thus eliminating the friction necessary to the wheels. Who painted the rails, and why? A local station-master did it, thinking by the neat and shining sight to please the Tsar. Winans had a solution: he ordered his men to bring ashes from the engine and sand from the river bed. Hastily the spick-and-span rails were rendered dirty and useful, and the train moved once more.

Nevertheless the train was delayed. In Moscow it was expected at seven in the evening, but there was no sign of it even by eight. The crowd at the main station of the First-Called Capital was restive. By nine it was riotous. A rumor spread that a calamity had overtaken the imperial party. There were cries:

"The Emperor has perished! Villains did away with him!"

At eleven o'clock the train came. The Tsar alighted, theatrically made a sign of the cross over his head and chest, then stepped to Kleinmichel and embraced him. The crowd roared its welcome. Nicholas led the way toward the chapel of the Iverian Madonna.

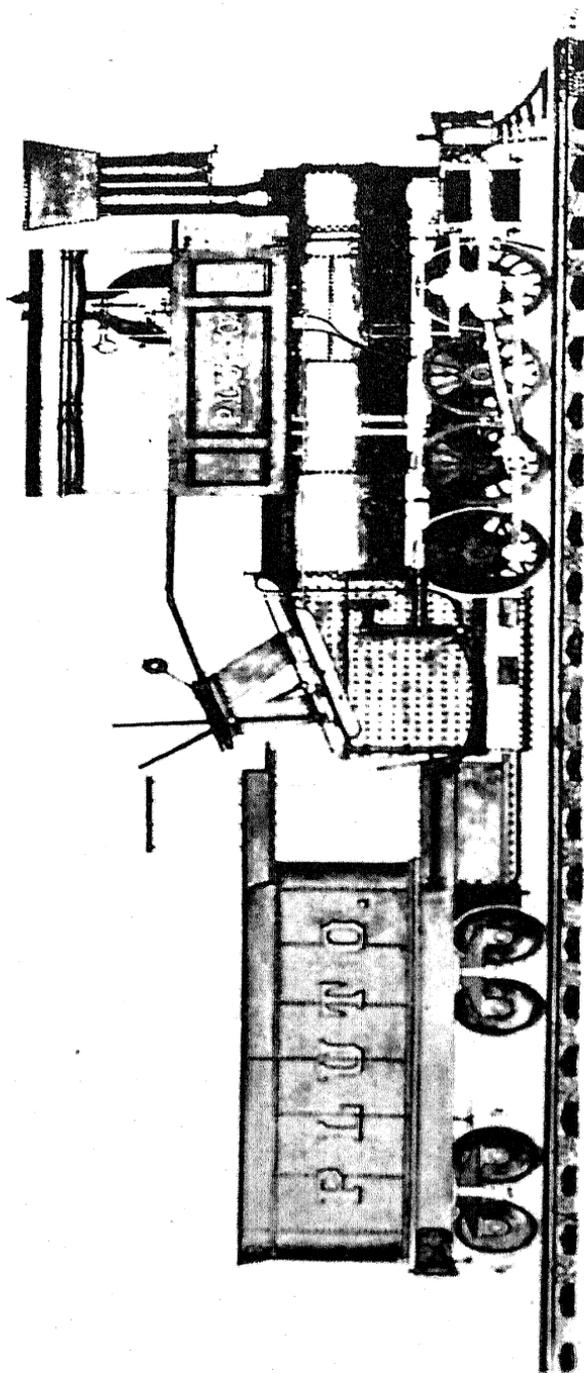


EASTWICK AND HARRISON'S
PATENT IMPROVED LOCOMOTIVE,
Manufactured at their works, Twelfth and Willow Street Rail Road,
PHILADELPHIA (1842)

Courtesy Association of American Railroads

LOCOMOTIVE CALLED "MERCURY"

An advertising lithograph issued by Eastwick and Harrison shortly before they moved to Russia.



Courtesy Association of American Railroads

LOCOMOTIVE CALLED "PLUTO"

A Winans engine of the early 1850s.

The Kremlin plaza was a sea of heads and jostling shoulders. The old bells boomed to the counterpoint of cannon.

The next day again the bells and guns struck, again the Kremlin was jampacked with people, and on the plaza a march-past was the ritual.

The uniforms flamed in the sun, pipes and drums rent the air, cries of command and hurrah came in waves.

Nicholas rose above the futile spectacle, a satisfied god, a symbol of his own power over the Empire—nay, over the rest of Europe and Asia.

He had broken the opposition at home, he had cowed the West. Time to deliver the next blow.

In the South there lay Sevastopol, his threat to Turkey, his point of departure toward the Bosphorus and new conquests. Who would dare to oppose him?

III

But three short years later England and France dared. For they sensed that the fuming and boasting colossus had feet of brittle clay, that the insides of the giant were a mess of corruption, and that the new road was too lone and short to reach supplies in time and quality to defend Sevastopol. So came the Crimean War. The charge of the Light Brigade was an ill-planned carnage and wholly useless, but the Russians of the Tsar committed grosser errors and suffered worse setbacks. The Tsar had too many foes united against him. Even the Turk showed surprising vim for the sick man of Europe when he joined in this counterattack upon Nicholas. Even the little and laughable kingdom of Sardinia sent her troops to aid the invaders of the Crimea as Cavour's bid to a future seat at the table of Europe's mighty.

And what of the Germanies, what of Austria? Surely their potentates, saved for the forces of reaction by the Tsar's troops in 1848 and '49, surely these kin and friends of Nicholas would hasten to his side?

But they too were glad of a chance to repay the humiliation of his snarling and spluttering at them in the long years when he

had acted as their self-appointed guardian and messianic deliverer. In these trying and decisive years 1854 and '55 their neutrality was not even benevolent.

Defeat after defeat came as nightmares to plague the tyrant. He had rattled his saber for so long, yet now, when his bluff was at last called, it turned out to be no tempered blade at all but a dull and stupid weapon.

At home murmurs of unrest rose to an audible chorus. Serfs, bleeding and starving in hordes, menaced the very foundation of the military state by incessant riots. Intellectuals fanned the flame, they who only a few months before had seemed to be crushed forever! Hollow was the Tsar's fastness, imminent its fall, great the joy of that Europe which believed in Progress, Liberty, Democracy.

Rather than fall he would die.

March 2, 1855, was the Tsar's last day on earth. The official explanation was that on a cold day, while reviewing his troops, Nicholas had walked and stood for hours unwarmed by any cloak or overcoat—his well-known spartanism—and so had caught the chill of his death.

The persistent and rather credible rumor had it, however, that in his satanical pride he had taken poison.

Bibliography and Notes

FOREMOST among my sources, as already mentioned in the introduction to this book, was the Patten Collection, hitherto unused by any biographer of either Whistler the artist or his father. Next in importance came Mrs. Whistler's diary, utilized by previous writers to the extent of but a few excerpts.

Most of the sixty letters of the Patten Collection were written by Major George Washington Whistler to General Joseph Gardner Swift, his brother-in-law, but some were exchanged between General Swift and his brother William Swift. A few were wholly or in part written by Mrs. Whistler and her stepdaughter Deborah. At the time the collection was lent to me I suggested to Mrs. Patten that upon completion of my work she donate these letters to the New York Public Library as fitting companions to Mrs. Whistler's diary now in the Library's possession. Mrs. Patten generously agreed, stipulating as an exception one letter dated July 13, 1834, which she had already promised to the Whistler House at Lowell, Mass., maintained by the Lowell Art Association (it is, incidentally, the letter in which Jimmie's birth is the main item of news).

The letters of the Patten Collection cover the period from the late 1820s to 1856. Of these I used most intensively the letters from July, 1842, when the Major was on his way to Russia, to April, 1849, when he died. The earlier letters served me only for the background whenever I felt the necessity of a flashback into the Whistlers' pre-Russian period. My recital of Major Whistler's attitude toward the Tsar and Tsardom, as well as many technical details of building the railroad, were based largely on these letters. Since my narrative proceeds in a chronological order, making it at all times fairly clear (I hope) of what year and month I speak, the reader possessing more than ordinary curiosity can trace any important view of Major Whistler's to a letter of the corresponding time in the Patten Collection—that is, after the collection is deposited with the New York Public Library and is open to students' inspection. Mrs. Whistler's few letters in the collection give an inkling of her attitudes and part in the events while the family lived in St. Petersburg, but some of the attitudes voiced by her in the letters, as well as her diary, are plainly not her own—they are echoes of the Major's views. Wherever this seemed evident to me I used them as the

Major's views. The chronology of the diary was faithfully followed, with one important exception, namely: the military review watched by the Whistlers from the palace of the Prince of Oldenburg (my Chapter Twelve) took place in May, 1845, but my narrative describes it as of May, 1844. I beg the reader's indulgence, but this deliberate shift was made necessary by the fact that the main expressions of Whistler's attitude toward the military Russia occurred in the spring of 1844, and the scene of the march-past logically belonged to that period in my narrative.

Now as for that diary of extraordinary length and detail which Mrs. Whistler kept throughout the Russian years. The manuscript is in one book but two parts, the first one opening in November, 1843 and ending in September, 1844, the second beginning in March, 1845 and closing in September, 1848.

First to use it was A. J. Bloor, who incorporated several entries of the diary in his article "Whistler's Boyhood" published in the *Critic* (New Rochelle, N.Y.) for September, 1903. While staying in the Connecticut town of Stonington he had met James Whistler's cousins, Miss Emma W. Palmer and Mrs. George D. Stanton, in whose possession the diary then was. It is to Bloor's credit that he was not swayed by his cordial relations with Whistler's cousins, but in his article candidly stated his opinion that some of Mrs. Whistler's pious expressions were comically incongruous and that her friends must have found didactic Anna rather oppressive.

A few years later the Pennells came across the diary; using it only a little more extensively than Bloor did, they displayed toward Anna and the manuscript a spirit of somewhat misplaced reverence. If you read E. R. and J. Pennell, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, Vol. I (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, and London: William Heinemann, 1908; here cited—3rd impression, 1909), chap. ii, "In Russia," pp. 13-23, and pit the text against the manuscript of the diary, you will see the Pennells' editorial caution which led them to choose only such paragraphs as were favorable to Mrs. Whistler's character and Jimmie's talent. There was also the handicap of the fact that Mrs. Whistler used a number of Russian words which the editors did not understand, or allusions to certain Russian personages which they failed to recognize.

Thus on p. 19, quoting the entry of July 27, 1846, they changed the Russian word *dvornik* or janitor to *dominie* or teacher. On p. 20 the Russian sour drink *kvass* became *greens*. On p. 22 the Pennells changed the text of the diary to read that "the court held a levée" and "the

Emperor kissed" Major Whistler on both cheeks, while in the original diary I read that it was the Count who held the levée and kissed the Major. The Pennells apparently did not bother to investigate the identity of the Count. Had they done so they would have learned of Count Kleinmichel's mercurial personality and would not have changed the Count mentioned in the diary to "the court" twice and "the Emperor" once.

In some cases the Pennells erred while copying dates of Mrs. Whistler's entries. Thus on p. 20 of the Pennells' volume one, the date November 14, 1846, should read December 5 of the same year. On p. 18, after the first sentence of the May 30, 1846, entry, another date should be inserted—June 20, so that the first word of the second sentence ("Yesterday") would properly mean June 19 instead of May 29. On the same page, under the entry of July 7, 1846, the Pennells were careless enough to copy "the Emperor's fiftieth anniversary" as "the Empress' fiftieth anniversary." There are other departures from Mrs. Whistler's text allowed in the Pennell opus, too numerous to be mentioned here. It is indeed amazing how many mistakes, slips, and misleading contractions of the original text the Pennells managed to cram into the little that they used of Mrs. Whistler's diary.

This is not to say that I do not appreciate the Pennells' yeoman labors of spading up and preserving a wide range of Whistleriana. Their enterprise and public spirit were especially evident to me when I visited Scarsdale, New York, to examine the Fleming Collection. The worthwhile letters of that collection were, shortly before her death in 1936, acquired by Mrs. Elizabeth Robins Pennell and are now part of the Pennell Collection at the Library of Congress in Washington. At Scarsdale I had the opportunity of reading the copies of the letters, transcribed on a typewriter before they were taken over by Mrs. Pennell; also of taking notes on various old newspaper clippings and other Whistleriana still remaining in the possession of the Misses Fleming. At the Library of Congress, in addition to the originals of the letters that had come from the Fleming Collection, there were before me many items gathered by Mrs. Pennell from other sources. They were mostly letters written by Mrs. Whistler to Margaret Hill, an aunt of the Misses Fleming, and to other friends after returning from Russia. Their main value to me was in the occasional references of their text to the Whistlers' stay in St. Petersburg, particularly to the Major's final illness and Anna's feelings at his deathbed (see my Chapter Thirty-One).

Of printed sources, the most useful to me was the Russian book by

B. Velikin, *Peterburg-Moskva; iz istorii Oktiabrskoi zheleznoi doroghi* [St. Petersburg-Moscow; concerning the history of the October Railroad] (Leningrad: the State Publishing House, part of the series "History of Factories and Mills," 1934). This is a most complete yet compact history of the building of Whistler's Russian line, with an appendix of exhaustive Russian bibliography on the question, including manuscript data in the Soviet archives. Among such, I note a Russian manuscript-bibliography of Major Whistler, apparently unpublished but used by Velikin when he wrote his book. The title of Velikin's book should be explained: until October (o.s.) of 1917 the railroad built by Whistler for Nicholas I was called in the Tsar's honor the Nikolaievskaya Railroad, but since the October-November revolution and the beginning of the Soviet regime it is known as the October Railroad.

The more important of the contemporary Russian documents pertaining to the building of the railroad are now in the Leningrad Archives of People's Economy and Domestic Policy. They are printed in two lengthy articles, both excellently edited by M. Krutikov, "Pervyie zheleznyie doroghi v Rossii" [The first railroads of Russia], *Krasny Arkhiv*, Vol. 76 (Moscow, 1936), pp. 83-155, dealing with the period 1835-42; and "Polozheniye rabochikh na postroike Peterburgo-Moskovskoi zh.d." [The workers' lot on the construction of the Petersburg-Moscow rr.], *Krasny Arkhiv*, Vol. 83 (1937), pp. 45-106, covering the period 1843-51.

Unpublished remains the English-language "Report of George W. Whistler to His Excellency, the Count Kleinmichel, on the Gauge of Russian Railways, Sept. 9, 1842," now in the files of the Transport Archives in Leningrad. Its typewritten copy, secured from the Soviet authorities, is in the New York Public Library, as is a photostat of the original. In *Zhurnal Glavnago Upravleniya Puti Soobshcheniya*, the official journal of the St. Petersburg Ministry of Communications, on pp. 58-60 of the issue for January-February, 1848, I found the Russian translation of a technical discussion by "Mister Major Uistler" on causes of railroad catastrophes.

A popular account in English by K. Grigoriyev, "The First Railway in Russia," *Sovietland*, Moscow, March, 1938, pp. 30-36, limits itself to Gerstner's time and work. There is *First Russian Railroad from St. Petersburg to Zarscoe-Selo and Pawlowsk*, translated from the German [of Christoph Kreeft], St. Petersburg, 1837, and published in London by Charles Skipper and East in the same year or the following; and there is also Franz Anton von Gerstner's *Bericht über den Stand der*

Unternehmung der Eisenbahn von St. Petersburg nach Zarskoe-Selo und Pawlowsk (Leipzig: J. B. Hirschfeld, 1838). Of much interest for the same period is V. Guriyev's *Uchrezhdeniye tortsovykh dorog i sukhoputnykh parokhodov v Rossii* [Establishment of wood-block roads and ground-going steamers in Russia], with rare prints by Ivanov, Piratsky and Seleznev, published in St. Petersburg in 1836-37. For material of wider scope I used the following titles:

I. S. Bliokh, *Vliyanie zheleznykh dorog na ekonomicheskoye sostoyaniye Rossii* [Influence of railroads upon the economic situation in Russia]. Vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1878.

Istorichesky ocherk razvitiya zheleznykh dorog v Rossii s ikh osnovaniya po 1897 g. vkhlyuchitelno [A historical account of the development of railroads in Russia from their foundation to 1897 inclusive]. St. Petersburg: Official publication of the Imperial Ministry of Communications, 1898-1901.

Postroika i eksploatatsiya Nikolaievskoi zheleznoi doroghi; kratky istorichesky ocherk [Building and exploitation of the St. Petersburg-Moscow Railroad; a short historical account]. St. Petersburg: Official publication of the Management of the Railroad, 1901.

Stoletiye zheleznykh dorog; trudy nauchno-tekhnicheskogo komiteta narodnogo komissariata putei soobshcheniya [One hundred years of railroads; works of the scientific-technical committee of the People's Commissariat of Communications], Number 20, Moscow, 1925.

From these and other Russian sources I gleaned, incidentally, material for that part of my Epilogue which describes the first months of Whistler's line after it was opened to through traffic, but Laurence Oliphant's observations on the same subject are to be found in Chapter I of his *The Russian Shores of the Black Sea in the Autumn of 1852* (New York: Redfield, 1854).

Some of my references to the role of railroads as a military weapon are based on Edwin A. Pratt, *The Rise of Rail-Power in War and Conquest* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1916; an earlier London edition in 1915). On early railroading in America I consulted Gerstner's swan song, *Berichte aus den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, über Eisenbahnen, Dampfschiffahrten, Banken und andere öffentliche Unternehmungen* (Leipzig: C. P. Melzer, 1839). The prophecy of Oliver Evans used in my Chapter One is condensed from pp. 327-32 of *Harper's Literary Museum selected from early American*

writings, compiled by Ola Elizabeth Winslow (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927); originally the prophecy was printed as "Concerning Railway Travel" in *Patent Right Oppression Exposed* by Oliver Evans, Philadelphia, 1813, under the pseudonym of Patrick N.I., Elisha, Esq. Poet Laureate. Other books on the history of America's railroads, of aid to my work, were:

- A Citizen of Baltimore [William P. Smith], *A History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road*. Baltimore: John Murphy Company, 1853.
- Angus Sinclair, *Development of the Locomotive Engine; a history*. New York: Published by the author, 1907.
- John W. Starr, Jr., *One Hundred Years of American Railroadng*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1928.
- Edward Hungerford, *The Story of Baltimore and Ohio, 1827-1927*. Two volumes. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928.
- Agnes C. Laut, *The Romance of the Rails; the story of American railroads*. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1936.
- Seymour Dunbar, *A History of Travel in America*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1915.
- Robert Selph Henry, *Trains*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938.

While presenting a fascinating story, Agnes Laut's book is not always historically reliable. Hungerford errs less frequently, but also should be checked against other sources. For instance, he writes that Ross Winans went to Russia and visited the Winter Palace when he was sent for by the Tsarist government "to superintend the mechanical installation of the Russian railroads" (Volume I, page 81). Actually Ross Winans did not go, but sent his two sons instead. Sinclair's book gives authentic material on the Winans family and other early locomotive builders; incidentally, the author joins the sizable company of those who would allow William Norris more professional merit than Major Whistler granted the man. It is possible that the Major was unduly harsh to his visitor in St. Petersburg (see my Chapter Six). On the subject of the scant recognition given to Major Whistler by the latter-day Americans, Sinclair writes (pp. 174-75):

"It is a curious comment on how the literary world discriminates between the man of utility and the man of art, that encyclopedias have extended biographies of the son, the artist, while not a word is said about the father who organized methods and forms of railroad business that became an inheritance of the whole world and are used today."

On the Major's work just before he went to Russia there are his own "Notes of an Experiment with Locomotive Engines," reprinted from the *Journal of the Franklin Institute* in the *American Railroad Journal and Mechanics' Magazine*, April 15, 1841; also *Proceedings of the Western Railroad Corporation, with a report of the committee of investigation, 1843* (Boston: Freeman and Bolles, 1843), as well as George Bliss, *Historical Memoir of the Western Railroad* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Company, 1863).

By way of Major Whistler's biography there is a brief book by George L. Vose, *A Sketch of the Life and Works of George W. Whistler* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1887), containing all the essential facts and much praise but no insight into the man and his times. The value of Gardner C. Teall, "Whistler's Father," *New England Magazine*, Boston, October, 1903, is that the article includes a letter from Major Whistler to his son George William describing his first presentation to Emperor Nicholas I. The letter is not part of the Patten Collection, and its present whereabouts are unknown to me. The following articles repeat in the main the data of Vose's slim volume, with but a few additions of new material:

Joseph Smith, "The Genesis of Jim Whistler," the *Illustrated American*, New York, May 25, 1895.

Gustav Kobbe, "Whistler's Father, Soldier, Engineer and Artist, Constructor of the First Railroad in Russia," *New York Herald*, May 20, 1917.

Carlisle Allan, "The Husband of Mrs. Whistler: His Fame as Engineer Equaled That of Their Son as an Artist," *New York Herald-Tribune*, May 6, 1934.

The most recent and most correct article on the Major is by H. K. Barrows in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. XX (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), while the gayest tribute to the memory of America's Forgotten Man was the following verse by Dale Fisher, written as a Father's Day advertisement for a Chicago department store, and thus published in the newspapers of that city in June, 1938:

"Metropolitan and rural
 Parenthood is always plural.
 Therefore, Whistler must have had,
 As you might expect, a Dad.
 Naturally, Whistler's other
 Parent was his famous Mother.

While she posed, serene and quaint,
 Someone had to mix the paint,
 Write the cheques and build the fire,
 Who, but Mr. Whistler's Sire!"

On the childhood of Major Whistler and on the life of his father, Captain John, a few paragraphs may be found on pp. 72, 73, 80, 97, and 240 in Vol. I of A. T. Andreas, *History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Chicago: Published by the author, 1884); also in M. M. Quaife, *Detroit Biographies: John Whistler* (Detroit Public Library: Burton Historical Collection Leaflet, September 1926). I used these two sources in addition, of course, to what I noted from the Whistler manuscripts and the Pennells' books.

Allworthy's suspicion that Whistler's mother was "a nasty old witch" is to be found in C. J. Bulliet's column, "Artists of Chicago," *Chicago News* for February 15, 1936. For a less controversial view of both mother and son there is, in addition to the Pennell books, an article by Anne Miller Downes, "A Portrait of Whistler by His Mother," *New York Times*, July 8, 1934. On Jimmie at a tender age the reader is referred to the already-mentioned article by A. J. Bloor, "Whistler's Boyhood," in *Critic* for September, 1903. F. W. Coburn's "Whistler and His Birthplace" is a detail-laden series which ran in the *Lowell Courier Citizen* in 1933-34. Mr. Coburn's files, besides a great deal of material of recent dates, hold clippings or transcriptions of items pertaining to the Whistlers in the *Lowell Advertiser* and the *Lowell Daily Journal and Courier* of the 1840s. And while I am on the subject of clippings, there are the four volumes of the Howard Mansfield Scrapbook on James Whistler, in the Avery Collection of the New York Public Library, which opened to me a multitude of sidelights and clues.

For whatever I have to say on the Imperial Academy of Arts and Russian painting of the 1840s as the background of Jimmie's early schooling I drew in the main upon the following articles in *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*: Igor Grabar, "Brullov, Karl," and "Brullovskaya Shkola," Vol. 7 (Moscow, 1927), pp. 692-95; A. Korshun, "Venetsianov, Alexei," and "Venetsianovskaya Shkola," Vol. 10 (1928), pp. 173-78; and Anonymous, "Fedotov, Pavel," Vol. 57 (1936), pp. 53-55. There is a good bibliography, in Russian, at the end of each article. An excellent biography of Fedotov, in a slightly fictionized form, was written in Russian by Viktor Shklovsky; it provides a fine

dry-point of art and manners in the St. Petersburg of the Whistlers' time. The English translation of the story-biography was done by Anthony Wixley and published as "Captain Fedotov" in *International Literature*, Moscow, numbers 3 and 4 for 1936. A contemporary tableau of the life and work of Russian artists early in the reign of Nicholas I can be discovered in that superb short story by Gogol, "The Portrait." In the Russian original it was part of his *Arabesques* (1831-35). The English translation which I consulted is entitled "The Mysterious Portrait"; it is part of *Taras Bulba and other tales* by Nikolai V. Gogol, published in Everyman's Library with an introduction by John Cournos (London: J. M. Dent & Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., no date given but seems to have been published either in 1915 or 1916).

Scattered points of assistance to my narrative were gleaned from Arthur Jerome Eddy, *Recollections and Impressions of James A. McNeill Whistler* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1903), and James Laver, *Whistler* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1930). From p. 63 of Mortimer Menpes, *Whistler as I Knew Him* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904), I derived for my Introduction the information on Whistler's contempt for the masses and childish love for kings and queens. In E. R. and J. Pennell, *The Whistler Journal* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1921), on pp. 269-70, there is the painter's profession of fondness for absolute monarchs who can have people's heads cut off; on pp. 180 and 181 he is quoted twice saying, ". . . my Russian cradle . . ."; while on pp. 104, 105, 182, and 252, valuable tales are told of Major and Mrs. Whistler, Brother Willie, and Seymour Haden. On p. 274 the Pennells record James Whistler's amusement at Elbert Hubbard's book about him, particularly at Hubbard's description of the Whistlers' stay in Russia. The account by the voluble Roycroft, on p. 143 of his *Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Artists—Whistler*, relates fantastically how one summer in Russia the Major took his entire family to camp with the construction gang:

"That summer with the workers and toilers, among the horses, living out of doors—eating at the campfire and sleeping under the sky—was the boy's one glimpse of paradise. 'My ambition then was to be the foreman of a construction gang—and is yet,' said the artist in describing that brief, happy time to a friend."

The story was, of course, totally untrue. Equally extravagant was

Hubbard's hailing of Whistler's mother as "a great soul, serious and strong" (p. 141).

For a foreigner's authentic view of the Russia from the late 1830s to the early '50s, to supplement what I found in Major and Mrs. Whistler's manuscripts, I used John S. Maxwell, *The Czar, His Court and People* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1848; London: Richard Bentley, 1854), not only because the author gave a good picture of the land and its ways, but also because he was a friend and lodger of the Whistlers in Russia, mentioning in his text the Major and his labors as well as the men and manners at the American works of Alexandrovsky, and being in his turn mentioned in Mrs. Whistler's diary. The two volumes by Elizabeth Rigby [Lady Eastlake], *Letters from the Shores of the Baltic* (2nd ed.; London: John Murray, 1842), were of particular worth since Mrs. Whistler and Jimmie read them before leaving for Russia and while in St. Petersburg. However, the outstanding book on the land of Nicholas I by a visiting foreigner is the highly intelligent work of Marquis de Custine, a friend of Stendhal. Custine's French original, in four volumes, is entitled *La Russie en 1839*; it was of course banned in Tsarist Russia, but some years ago I saw a Soviet-translated and annotated edition. In its English translation it was published in London in 1843 as *Empire of the Czar* and in New York in 1844 as *Russia* (one volume, D. Appleton & Company); for my narrative I used the New York edition. Wherever I relied upon either Maxwell or Rigby or Custine I endeavored to make the source clear in my text, even though for technical reasons I could not pause to give the exact page of the reference. For the scene of approach to St. Petersburg, and the thumbnail sketch of Moscow, since no such descriptions were available in the Whistlers' own writings, I reworked and joined in my own fashion whatever I discovered in the books of Custine, Maxwell, and, to a far lesser extent, Rigby, as well as in contemporary tomes or essays by sundry Russians. The best Russian material on street scenes and home customs in St. Petersburg of that time I spotted in A. Pelikan, "Vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka" [In the second half of the nineteenth century], *Golos Minuvshago*, Moscow, February 1914, pp. 104-41. Despite the time span indicated in Pelikan's reminiscences, they actually date back to the 1840s.

The meeting between Dostoyevsky and Belinsky in front of the railroad station (my Chapter Twenty-Six) is described on the strength of Dostoyevsky's own notes appended to *Besy* [The Possessed], which

may be found in almost any Russian edition. I felt safe in assuming that under "D." the author meant himself. Belinsky's appearance is portrayed by me on the basis of Ivan Turgenev's "Literaturniya Vospominaniya" [Literary Reminiscences], pp. 21-22, Vol. X of his full collection of works (4th ed.; St. Petersburg: Glazunov, 1897). For certain details of Dostoyevsky's life I used Avrahm Yarmolinsky, *Dostoevsky* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1934); and A. A. Dostoyevsky (ed.), *Vospominaniya Andreia M. Dostoyevskogo* [Reminiscences of Andrew Dostoyevsky] (Leningrad: Writers' Publishing House, 1930).

In 1864 the Russian poet Nekrasov wrote a poem, "Zheleznaya Dorogha" [The Railroad], ringing with indignation at the cruelties to which the serf-workers were subjected while building the line between the two capitals. For its text, and the historical notes appended thereto by K. I. Chukovsky, I used Nikolai Nekrasov, *Stikhotvoreniya* [Poems], Vol. II (Moscow: State Publishing House, 1930). For a Yankee's earlier and broader protest on the railroads in general, as well as for his occasionally milder verdict on the same score, I took advantage of Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden or Life in the Woods*, with an introduction and notes by Francis H. Allen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910).

Brief memories of the Russian days with Major Whistler are contained in two books by Joseph Harrison, Jr., *The Iron Worker and King Solomon* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, printed for private circulation, 1868), and *The Locomotive Engine and Philadelphia's Share in Its Early Improvements* (Philadelphia: G. Gebbie, 1872). I have been told that a daughter of Harrison's, born in St. Petersburg, resided in Philadelphia as late as 1938; she was then in her eighties. Her son, Kenneth Durant, of the New York office of the Soviet Telegraph Agency (Tass), assured me that no letters or diaries pertaining to the subject of this book have been preserved by his mother. In the Patten Collection I chanced across a column-long clipping from the New York *Sun* for May 4, 1847, entitled "Triumph of American Mechanics; Visit of the Emperor Nicholas to the Workshops of Messrs. Harrison, Winans and Eastwick," based on a letter from St. Petersburg of March 20, 1847. On the Winanses since Major Whistler's time there is bright and informing chatter in John E. Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891* (Baltimore: the Norman, Remington Company, 1917), and a few illus-

trated paragraphs in the Russian magazine *Stolitsa i Usadba* for March 15, 1914.

Maxwell, as secretary to Colonel Todd, provided in his book a few telling lines on the jolly Ambassador, but my main source on the Kentuckian, in addition to what appeared in Major Whistler's letters and especially Mrs. Whistler's diary, was G. W. Griffin, *Memoir of Col. Chas. S. Todd* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1873). Pp. 90-112 of Griffin's book supply the text of a lecture delivered by Todd in Frankfort, Ky., shortly after his return from Russia in 1846 or '47, headed "Russia: Her Resources, Religion, Literature, Etc.," which in turn contains the text of a dispatch he sent to the Department of State in September, 1845. Like Maxwell's book, Todd's discourse is of value for a picture it gives of the Russian-American commercial, diplomatic, and military relations in the 1840s.

On General Swift and his relations with Major Whistler and William McNeill, considerable light was gained from Harrison Ellery (ed.), *The Memoirs of Gen. Joseph Gardner Swift, LL.D., U.S.A., first graduate of the United States Military Academy, West Point, chief engineer U.S.A. from 1812 to 1818* (Worcester, Mass.: Privately printed by the press of F. S. Blanchard, 1890). This was supplemented by William Patten, "Gen. Joseph Swift, Nantucketer, First Graduate of West Point," a lengthy article published in the *Nantucket Island, Mass., Inquirer and Mirror* for August 17, 1935. The same sources bear upon Captain William H. Swift, the General's brother.

Duff Green emerges from his own *Facts and Suggestions, biographical, historical, financial and political, addressed to the people of the United States* (New York: Richardson & Company, 1866), particularly pp. 82-84; as well as his letters from Paris and London in Chauncey S. Boucher and Robert P. Brooks (eds.), *Correspondence Addressed to John C. Calhoun, 1837-1849*, "Sixteenth Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission" (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), and the earlier published *Calhoun Correspondence* in Vol. II of "Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1899" (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900). On Elliott Cresson I employed the sporadic data in Early Lee Fox, *The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840*, "Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science," series XXXVII, no. 3 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1919); also the two unsigned articles, "The American Church:—And Slavery," *The Christian Observer*, London, November, 1846, and "Mr.

Elliott Cresson and the Pro-Slavery Colonization Society" in the same magazine for May, 1847. For my Chapter One, on Major Whistler's conversations with Green and Cresson in London I used the Major's letter of July 15, 1842 (Patten Collection).

The *Dictionary of American Biography* has articles on Major and James Whistler, both Swifts, two of the Winanses, McNeill, Harrison, Dr. Maynard, Green, Cresson, and Todd, all supplied with bibliographies which may be profitably consulted for titles to augment those mentioned here. However, the *Dictionary* omits George William Whistler, Andrew Eastwick, William L. Winans, John S. Maxwell, Ralph and Colin Ingersoll, and William and Joseph Ropes. It has an article on John Codman Ropes, the military historian, who was born in 1836 in St. Petersburg where his father William Ropes was in business, but it is not the William Ropes of my narrative, although doubtless a relative—possibly a cousin—and even partner in business. In passing I should like to voice a polite complaint that the *Dictionary of American Biography* on occasion omits certain important albeit unpleasant features of its subjects' lives. Thus, it says not a word about the drunkenness which in sad fact played such a decisive role in the life of William Gibbs McNeill. McNeill's biographer in the *Dictionary* is misled by some contemporary eulogies into saying: "His close application to work severely tried his physical powers." Actually it was drink, not work, that impaired Mac's health and hastened his end.

In certain cases I also looked up Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography* and Cullum's *West Point Biographical Register*. Seymour Haden's life is told in *Dictionary of National Biography*, second supplement, Vol. II (New York and London: The Macmillan Company, 1912). For the Russians figuring in my book I consulted *Russky Biografichesky Slovar* published in St. Petersburg from about 1900 to a time shortly before the revolution of 1917, and *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* issued in Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s. For bibliographical and, partly, biographical material I found comprehensive and useful Anna M. Babey, *Americans in Russia 1776-1917; a study of the American travelers from the American revolution to the Russian revolution* (New York: The Comet Press, 1938).

A few Russians who worked as officers or engineers on the construction of the railroad and so knew the Whistlers left engaging memoirs. Baron A. I. Delvig was Kleinmichel's aide-de-camp; of the five volumes of his *Moi Vospominaniya* [My Reminiscences] I used

the first two, which in scope reach to the end of the reign of Nicholas I (St. Petersburg: Rumiantsevsky Museum, 1913). A. I. Shtukenberg was an engineer assisting Major Whistler; his "Iz istorii zheliezno-dorozhnago dela v Rossii" [Concerning the history of railroad work in Russia] ran serially in *Russkaya Starina*, St. Petersburg, in 1885-86. The same magazine in 1899-1904 published voluminous "Zapiski" [Notes] by Baron (later Count) Modest A. Korff, who has a great deal to say not only about the railroad and Kleinmichel, but also Nicholas and court life. It is of course an exceedingly flattering picture of the Tsar's Russia that he attempts to give. A more judicious view by a contemporary is to be derived from A. V. Nikitenko, *Moya povest o samom sebe—zapiski i dnevnik, 1804-1877 gg.* [My narrative about myself—notes and diary, 1804-1877] (St. Petersburg: Vol. I, 1904; Vol. II, 1905). He is the rare phenomenon of a liberal official and censor whom I occasionally quote in my text.

The memoir and anecdotal literature on the Russian 1840s is enormous. It was great sport to wade through it, but space here does not permit to cite all the articles, notes, diaries, and reminiscences which I read and used, while working on my book, in such historical journals as *Russky Arkhiv*, *Russkaya Starina*, *Istorichesky Vestnik*, *Golos Minuushago*, *Minuushiye Gody*, *Byloye*, and *Krasny Arkhiv*. I will, however, try to give a list of the more important titles consulted on Nicholas himself as he appeared throughout his long reign (1825-55) and in the 1840s especially.

The literature available on Nicholas I as Tsar and man, although extensive, is not as penetrating as one would want it to be in these modern days when so much of Europe is crushed and mute under the boots of stormy and sickly despots, whose prototype mad Paul's son undoubtedly was. The most detailed and yet extremely conventional and pedestrian is the four-volume work by Theodor Schiemann, *Geschichte Russlands unter Kaiser Nikolaus I*, of which—for my purpose—I perused Volume IV, covering the period 1840-55 (Berlin and Leipzig: De Gruyter & Company, 1919). The chief merit of Schiemann's contribution is that he uncovered ample material on Nicholas in the official archives of Germany, shedding light on the Tsar's relations with his numerous German kin. The official biography of Nicholas published in Russia before the revolution is N. K. Schilder, *Imperator Nikolai Pervy, yego zhizn i tsarstvovaniye* [Emperor Nicholas I, his life and reign], of which I used, however warily, Volume II (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1903), especially pp. 619-

29 dealing with the Tsar's role in the revolutionary years 1848-49. Incidentally, Shilder denied that upon hearing of the French revolution, Nicholas said, "Saddle your horses, gentlemen." Making due note of this denial, I nevertheless use the phrase in my text for two reasons: a) It is too firmly a part of the Russian lore on Nicholas I, b) It was entirely within his character to growl a command of this sort. What Shilder had to say on Nicholas, Russia, and 1848, should be discounted and balanced with the aid of such publications of the post-Tsarist era as, say, A. Shilov, "Revolutsiya 1848 g. i ozhidaniye yeya v Rossii" [The revolution of 1848 and its expectation in Russia], *Golos Minuvshago*, Moscow, April-June, 1918, pp. 231-47, based on the documents of the Tsar's secret police.

Of the same official brand as Shilder's work is the volume by N. F. Dubrovin (ed.), *Materialy i cherty k biografii Imperatora Nikolai I i k istorii yego tsarstvovaniya* [Data and features on the biography of Emperor Nicholas I and the history of his reign], published as Vol. 98 of *Sbornik Imperatorskago Russkago Istoricheskago Obshchestva* (St. Petersburg, 1896). Against this must be placed the anti-Tsarist book by an anonymous author, *Materialy dlia tsarstvovaniya imperatora Nikolai Pavlovicha* [Data for the reign of Emperor Nicholas, son of Paul] (Leipzig: E. L. Kasparovich, 1880); also a tome by M. O. Gershenzon (ed.), *Epokha Nikolai I* [The Epoch of Nicholas I] (Moscow: Obrazovaniye, 1911).

It is a pity that such eminent native historians as Klyuchevsky and Pokrovsky gave on Nicholas I but chapters and paragraphs, however brilliant, where one longs for full-length books by scholars of this caliber. The lack is somewhat filled by A. E. Presniakov, *Apoghei samoderskhaviya, Nikolai I* [The apogee of autocracy, Nicholas I] (Leningrad: Brokhaus-Efron, 1925), and M. Polievktov, *Nikolai I—biografiya i obzor tsarstvovaniya* [Nicholas I—biography and review of the reign] (Moscow: M. and S. Sabashnikov, 1918). In the field of frank but not too biased post-revolutionary appraisals of the Tsar, I also read and made notes of such texts as Mst. Tsiavlovsky (ed.), "Razvrat Nikolai Pavlovicha i yego priblizhennykh lyubimtsev" [Vice of Nicholas and his favorites], *Golos Minuvshago*, June, 1922, pp. 64-68, a brief but most revealing store of information; and B. Fedorov, "Nikolai I v proizvedeniyakh A. I. Gertsena" [Nicholas I in the works of Alexander Herzen], in the same journal, May-June, 1917, pp. 47-59.

Fedorov's piece is an able resumé of the most vitriolic hatred Herzen

ever poured upon Nicholas I, the tyrant. I find, however, that Fedorov missed one of the rebel's most amusing *mots*: the comparison of the Tsar's stubbornness to that of a pregnant woman when she wants something not with her reason but with her animal belly. Since in Herzen the Tsar had his most implacable and caustic foe, no history of Russia from 1825 to 1855 can be written without Herzen's complete texts as a most necessary manual. His best book is *Byloye i Dumy* [Past and Thoughts], the first full edition of which was published in Berlin in 1921 by the Slovo house. The complete English of this edition is *My Past and Thoughts*, translated by Constance Garnett, and published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., (New York, 1924-28, six volumes).

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